United Nations S/PV.8026

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8026th meeting
Thursday, 17 August 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
	Ukraine	Mr. Paulichenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 8 August 2017 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2293 (2016) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2017/672/Rev.1)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-26116 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 8 August 2017 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2293 (2016) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2017/672/Rev.1)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Security Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/672/Rev.1, which contains the text of a letter dated 8 August from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2293 (2016) addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

(*spoke in English*)

I have the honour to speak in my capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In my briefing this morning, it is my intention to touch upon three issues. First, I will highlight the final report (see S/2017/672/Rev.1) of the Group of Experts, the findings and recommendations of which the Committee considered during its informal consultations on 21 July. Secondly, I intend to provide an overview of the work of the Committee since I last briefed the Security Council on 11 October 2016 (see S/PV.7788), not only in terms of the activities conducted by the Committee in addressing the complex challenges facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo today and over the long-term but also with a view to promoting synergy among United Nations actors and cooperation with the region towards the building of peace and stability in the country. Finally, I will report on the work that lies ahead, including a number of possible activities for the Committee in the coming few months.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to welcome him to this briefing, which comes at a moment when the Democratic Republic of the Congo is facing tremendous challenges. The final report of the Group of Experts of 10 August depicts a complex picture in connection with those challenges. The Group observed a changing dynamic of conflict and armed mobilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as reflected by the further fragmentation of armed groups operating in a more decentralized, albeit heavily networked, manner. Foreign and local armed groups are increasingly interconnected, which also has an impact on patterns of violence.

Concerning natural resources, the implementation of mineral traceability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has considerably reduced instances of armed groups directly and indirectly benefiting from the exploitation and trade of tin, tantalum and tungsten. However, the Group found that the ITRI Ltd Tin Supply Chain initiative traceability system has shortcomings in its implementation, thereby enabling different actors to intentionally or inadvertently facilitate smuggling. Moreover, the gold sector continues to suffer from the lack of a traceability system, as artisanally sourced gold from conflict-affected areas can still be exported to international markets through smuggling, involving illicit financial flows. Furthermore, legally issued certificates are being used in a fraudulent manner to export gold out of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and efforts must be made in that country, as well as the transit and recipient countries, to address the smuggling of gold in carry-on luggage aboard flights.

In the area of human rights and international humanitarian law, the Group observed that violations continue to be at significant levels in the the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Group focused on violations, such as cases of child rape in South Kivu province, the attack on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(MONUSCO) in North Kivu province, and the murder of two of its members on 12 March in Central Kasaï province. In that context, I would like to recall that, of the eight recommendations set out in the Group's final report, the Committee considered, during its informal consultations on 21 July, four recommendations that were addressed to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while the remaining four recommendations of the Group were addressed to the Security Council, including one recommendation related to the investigation into the murder of two members of the Group of Experts.

I would like to pause here for a moment and acknowledge the presence in the Chamber today of Mr. John Sharp and Mrs. Michele Sharp, the parents of Michael Sharp, as well as Ms. Maria Moresby and Ms. Elizabeth Moresby, the mother and sister of Zaida Catalán, the two deceased members of the Group of Experts. As I mentioned in a statement on 29 March (see SC/12768-PKO/629), I had the honour to know Michael and Zaida personally and to work closely with them in my capacity as the Chair of the Committee. Despite the numerous risks and challenges they faced, their profound courage, dedication to their work and utter devotion to the cause of peace were a source of inspiration for us all. The tragic loss of Michael and Zaida is a painful reminder of the volatile environments in which the members of the United Nations groups and panels of experts operate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere, which often come at great personal cost. That loss is also a reminder of the suffering inflicted upon a great number of innocent civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and that realizing lasting peace for those who have no voice remains our ultimate cause.

It is against that backdrop that the Committee and the Group of Experts have taken an active role in addressing both the short-term and long-term challenges facing the country. That has been marked by a deliberate effort to involve the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and those of the Great Lakes region to promote synergies among United Nations actors working on sanctions-related issues and to encourage collaborative efforts among regional and international partners, with the aim of forging a common approach to help achieve peace and stability.

In that context, following my trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region in August 2016, the Committee conducted a number of activities with the aim of maintaining dialogue with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the Permanent Mission in New York and Government officials in Kinshasa with regard to several aspects related to the Committee's work. For example, on 19 November 2016, the Committee received a briefing from Ms. Jeanine Mabunda, Presidential Adviser on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, following which the Committee held informal consultations with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The Committee also maintained its commitment to conduct outreach with representatives of the region. On 30 January, I briefed the regional States in connection with the Group's mid-term report (see S/2016/1102). During that meeting, the Committee engaged with the invited States and listened to their views with regard to the mid-term report and the recommendations therein. In the same vein, on 20 March, the Committee held its ninth formal meeting, which aimed at enhancing its understanding of the security situation and the surrounding regional dynamics. The meeting featured briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Head of MONUSCO, as well as statements by the representatives of the invited regional States, on the progress and challenges in their cooperation bilaterally or regionally, including in the context of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, particularly regarding support for the neutralization of armed groups, as well as disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation.

The security situation in the country, and particularly in the Kasaï region, received further close attention by the Committee when it received a detailed briefing by MONUSCO on 22 May, following which a representative of the United Nations Mine Action Service made a presentation on weapons and ammunition management in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With a view to promoting collaboration and coordination among United Nations and regional actors, the Committee held its first-ever open briefing on 4 August on the illicit exploitation of natural resources, with broad participation from the United Nations

membership at large. Speakers included the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Acting Coordinator of the Group of Experts, as well as the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other participants from the region.

As highlighted in numerous reports of the Group of Experts, the proceeds from the illegal exploitation of natural resources fuel criminal networks, armed groups and the ongoing insecurity in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such exploitation further limits the capacity of the State by facilitating corruption, weakening State institutions and hindering economic growth and social development. For example, although a major producer of gold and one of the largest diamond producers in the world, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the 47 least-developed countries according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Therefore, the fight against the illicit trafficking of natural resources is critical to enable the Democratic Republic of the Congo to move beyond conflict towards peacebuilding and development. The open-format briefing on 4 August was intended to take stock of the progress at the national and regional levels, as well as existing challenges and shortcomings, and to facilitate further improvements through a collaborative approach involving relevant regional and international partners.

Looking forward, the coming months will be a critical period for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that context, the Committee will remain vigilant and ensure that its work and that of the Group of Experts contribute to peace and stability in the country. Towards that goal, I intend to continue collaboration with the relevant United Nations interlocutors with a view to obtaining updated information on various aspects of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that are relevant to the Committee's mandate and promote further synergy in its work.

The Committee also remains committed to maintaining its dialogue with its interlocutors from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and those in the wider region in order to promote further collaboration with the Committee and the Group of Experts. In that context, the Committee will consider the possibility of a second mission to the region by the Chair in late October to visit the Democratic Republic of the Congo to speak with representatives of the Government and MONUSCO, as well as key partners in other regional capitals.

Among the major objectives of my delegation for that visit would be obtaining first-hand knowledge of the implementation of the measures pursuant to resolution 2360 (2017) and of the impact of the exploitation of natural resources on the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in line with Security Council emphasis as set out in paragraphs 19 to 26 of the resolution. The visit would also provide an opportunity to hold legal consultations with the Member State concerned in order to ensure the full implementation of the measures set forth in the resolution. The visit's findings would hopefully feed into the Council's review of the measures imposed by the solution 2360 (2017), as well as future engagement with the State concerned on the implementation of the measures.

Following my return to New York from the visit, I intend to convene a meeting of the Committee with regional States. During that meeting my aims will be to provide an overview of the relation of the Group's final report of 10 August, deliver a briefing on my October visit to the region and promote a general discussion on the effectiveness of the sanctions regime and ways by which to increase its contribution to peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the President for organizing today's meeting and for his briefing as Chair on the activities of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) — the Democratic Republic of the Congo Sanctions Committee — in recent months.

Today's meeting cannot be a meeting like any other. The killings, last March, of Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp deeply struck and saddened us. The presence of the families of Zaida and Michael in the Chamber today reminds us again, if there were such a need, of the dreadful nature of these crimes. On behalf of France, I would like to address Mrs. Maria Moresby, Mrs. Elizabeth Moresby, Mr. John Sharp and Mrs. Michele Sharp to express once again our sincere

condolences for the loss of their children and sister and to express our admiration and gratitude for Michael's and Zaida's remarkable work. The entire United Nations family shares their sorrow. They can rest assured that France is at their side in this time of trial.

As France did in its national capacity, the Security Council, too, condemned these killings in the strongest terms. It has repeatedly called for an in-depth investigation to identify the perpetrators of the crimes and bring them to justice. In that regard, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for transmitting the findings of the Board of Inquiry that was established last April. The elements that the Board of Inquiry provided have caught our attention, including its finding that further research and investigation are required. In that regard, we renew our call for the Secretary-General to establish, as soon as possible and as he is able to do, a special investigative mechanism to enable the competent legal authorities to effectively prosecute these crimes and achieve justice. In Guinea in 2009 and South Sudan in 2016, for example, similar mechanisms proved particularly useful in shedding light on related dire events before the Council. We owe it to the memory of these two experts that justice be done. We owe it to their loved ones, to the many groups of experts set up by the Council and to all United Nations personnel and to the long-suffering Congolese people themselves.

Today's meeting is also of particular importance because the current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains a major source of concern. In that regard, I welcome the presence of the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Léonard She Okitundu. The final report of the Group of Experts (see S/2017/672/Rev.1), which is of a high quality despite these particularly tragic circumstances, underlines once again the gravity of the situation and the risks of its continuing deterioration.

The violence in the Kasaï region, which remains at an unsustainable level, is compounded by the spread of insecurity to Tanganyika, the increase in intercommunal conflicts in these areas and even the escape of prisoners in unusual proportions. Civilian populations continue to be the primary victims of this growing insecurity, as is illustrated by the flow of displaced persons and refugees. The Deputy Secretary-General highlighted this point last week: the humanitarian situation remains very difficult, especially for women (see S/PV.8022).

Reversing this unhappy dynamic necessarily calls for increased efforts to prevent impunity on the part of perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, irrespective of their affiliation. It is up to the Congolese authorities to get involved, including by fully cooperating with the team of international experts set up by the Human Rights Council last June. The team, established by consensus and with the consent of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, must be able to enjoy unrestricted access to the places and persons concerned in order to identify those responsible for the violations committed.

As the deadline for holding elections approaches, the accumulation of delays in the implementation of the 31 December agreement generates questions and tensions that cannot contribute to the country's peace and stability. The agreement, which is the framework agreed by all the Congolese parties for the transition towards the holding of elections, remains the only credible road map for an end to the crisis in the country. As the Council recalled in its presidential statement of 26 July (S/PRST/2017/12), it is urgent that the agreement be implemented in good faith and in all its components. It is up to the Congolese authorities to take all necessary measures as soon as possible to ensure that credible and inclusive elections are held as agreed in the agreement no later than December 2017. It is particularly urgent for the electoral calendar to be released.

The tragic deaths of Zaida and Michael remind us of the responsibility we must collectively exercise to put an end to the violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A large number of civilians have already lost their lives. Faced with this intolerable threat, we call on all Congolese political actors to be responsible and to act decisively in order to respect the commitments made last December. The stability of the country and its inhabitants depends upon it, as does that of the region as a whole.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I would like to start by thanking you, Mr. President, for the dedication you have shown as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) and in ensuring that Michael Sharp's and Zaida Catalán's important work continues. The Group of Experts has done, and will continue to do, excellent work, and I am honoured that we can demonstrate this commitment — voice this commitment — in the presence of Michael's and Zaida's families in the Chamber this morning. We are humbled by the presence

here today of Mr. and Mrs. Sharp and Mrs. Maria Moresby and Mrs. Elizabeth Moresby.

To Zaida's and Michael's families, I would like to say that the Security Council sits on the front lines of conflict resolution and that their children and their sister gave their lives working to find peace and resolve conflict. They pursued truth and justice, and we owe it to them to also pursue truth and justice and investigate their murders.

Michael and Zaida worked to shed light on the horrific crimes plaguing the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We, in turn, must shine a light on their murders and pursue a full understanding of the events surrounding their deaths. The murder of United Nations officials cannot end with an administrative inquiry into their deaths. There needs to be a genuine investigation that uncovers the facts surrounding this case.

We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to pursue a follow-on mechanism to the Board of Inquiry under his own authority, and we urge him to waste no time in establishing the mechanism. There is no time for delay. We must urgently continue our efforts to uncover the truth surrounding Michael's and Zaida's deaths.

While Michael and Zaida are no longer with us, their work through the Group of Experts must continue. As highlighted by the Group of Experts, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo needs to do more to strengthen legitimate trade in natural resources and to reduce illicit trafficking in those resources. Illicit trafficking strengthens armed groups and corrupt officials, and therefore perpetuates conflict. Regional countries and organizations and all Member States must work together to reduce such illicit trafficking.

While the investigations of the Group of Experts have helped us to understand the nature and means of illicit trafficking and the funding of armed groups, their work needs to continue in parallel with the Democratic Republic of the Congo elections and a peaceful transition of power in order to bring real peace to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Without a democratic transition, we can expect continued cycles of widespread violence. The Congolese people are upset with their Government and are tired of waiting for the elections called for by their Constitution. We call upon the authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to announce the timeline for the overdue elections and to stick to it. In the absence of an elections timeline, the United States will pursue stronger sanctions in the Council, and we will take measures to increase the pressure on and hold accountable those who undermine peace and stability or democratic institutions and processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or who are working on behalf of or supporting already listed individuals.

Finally, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is responsible for providing security for its citizens, who continue to suffer violent attacks and sexual and gender-based violence, who are fleeing their homes in the tens of thousands and who struggle to meet their basic needs as they are deprived of their livelihoods and resources. While many of the attacks are perpetrated by armed groups, we are concerned that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to support and profit from those armed groups and to commit human rights violations with impunity. Those actions and the continued delay in elections call into question the legitimacy of the current Government.

Our work is not yet done, just as the work of Michael and Zaida and the Group of Experts is not yet done. We must continue to find ways to seek peace and justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for Michael and Zaida, just as Michael and Zaida attempted to do.

Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni (Sweden): I thank you, Mr. President, for your briefing as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is highly appreciated.

Let me start by acknowledging the presence of the families of Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp.On behalf of Sweden and me, personally, I extend our deepest condolences and heartfelt to them.

I would also like to acknowledge His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Once again, we strongly condemn the murders of Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp. It is intolerable that those tasked by the Council to investigate violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law are brutally killed. Zaida Catalán was the humanitarian expert of the Group of Experts. She was recognized for conducting her work with skill and integrity and for standing up for human rights and international humanitarian law. The same commitment and dedication led her to become a strong advocate for the human rights of the Congolese people. We

know that Michael Sharp was a deeply appreciated coordinator of the Group and that he brought with him equal dedication.

We recognize the particularly difficult circumstances under which the colleagues of Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp worked to finalize the report (see S/2017/672/Rev.1), and we commend them for their indispensable work. In honour of Zaida Catalán, Michael Sharp and of their colleagues, we would like the focus of today's meeting to be on their report and on how we can bring peace and justice to all those who suffer in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sweden welcomes the report, which illustrates the fragile and worrying security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including its ethnic dimensions. In that context, information about ex-combatants being re-mobilized is worrisome. The reintegration of former combatants, notably child soldiers, must be significantly improved and attention given to the needs of both female and male combatants. As a partner and donor to the Congolese disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, Sweden supports the recommendation by the Group of Experts to revise the implementation of the DDR programme, with a particular focus on job creation and professional training.

Revenues from conflict minerals fuel the ongoing insecurity. Sweden is pleased that our hard work has resulted in a European Union regulation that requires importers of conflict minerals to control their supply chains. This is one example of relevant instruments in the fight against the international trade in conflict minerals. It is clear that more needs to be done.

Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not confined to the east; it touches both Kasaï and Tanganyika. The report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of 4 August recounts a terrible situation in the Kasaï region, with violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. That includes summary executions, extrajudicial killings, the recruitment of children into militias and horrifying testimonies of mutilations, sexual violence and rape. The scale of the violence has a direct negative impact on peace and security. There must be no impunity for those crimes.

The Kavumu case in South Kivu province, with 42 incidents of aggravated rape of children, is another example of barbaric crimes being committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sweden welcomes the arrest of a number of suspects for those crimes. Thorough investigation and prosecution is necessary in order to ensure justice for those victims. In that regard, we would welcome further collaboration among the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Sanctions Committee. That could entail sharing information more regularly, including through meetings, on groups and individuals that meet the criteria for listing.

Most important, though, the sanctions regime must be upheld and implemented by all parties, and the Group of Experts must have the adequate means to carry out its mandate. Sweden supports the Group's recommendation to extend the mandate to 18 months and to allow time for information-gathering under a more stringent security regime.

There can be no peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo without democratic progress. We continue to call for the full implementation of the New Year's Eve agreement, in good faith and by and with all Congolese stakeholders. Free, fair, credible and inclusive elections remain the only viable and peaceful way out of the current political crisis, which otherwise, as the conflict in Kasaï illustrates, fuels further conflict and instability.

To promote peaceful development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we would like to underline the importance of joint efforts by the African Union and the United Nations, such as the recent high-level visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo led by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Mohammed. In the same vein, we welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. She Okitundu here today. We look forward to the Democratic Republic of the Congo's close cooperation with the United Nations and the Council going forward.

One of the recommendations of the Group of Experts is that the United Nations continue its investigations into the murders of the experts. We share that view. No stone should be left unturned in our efforts to deliver justice for those who lost their lives in the service of the United Nations. Now that the Board of Inquiry has delivered its report, we welcome the fact that the Secretary-General is looking into which follow-up mechanism would best serve our joint efforts to establish the truth and bring the perpetrators

to justice, as well as supporting the ongoing national investigations. We support the establishment of such a mechanism by the Secretary-General.

Separately, we must draw lessons from possible failures in the system, and we will carefully study the Board of Inquiry's conclusions and recommendations in this regard. It is the Council's duty to ensure the safety of the United Nations personnel mandated by it. What happened to Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp should never happen again.

Mr. Pavlichenko (Ukraine): I should like to thank Ambassador Aboulatta, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for his briefing and his leadership.

The Chair's statement and the final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/2017/672/Rev.1) depict the grim reality on the ground. Illicit trade in natural resources, arms smuggling, the fragmentation of illegal armed groups, human rights abuses, ethnic clashes and atrocities committed by foreign and local armed groups remain widespread in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Moreover, a drastic destabilization in the Kasaï provinces demonstrates that no part of the country is immune from such outrages.

At the same time, one cannot deny that the existing sanctions regime has played an important role in mitigating some threats. For instance, it reduced opportunities for armed groups to benefit from illegal involvement in the exploitation of natural resources, particularly for tin, tantalaum and tungsten. However, the gold sector lags behind and the lack of traceability systems leaves an opportunity for smugglers to profit from that gap.

Despite some positive trends, the overall situation does not show signs of significant improvement. We are therefore deeply concerned about further deterioration of the security environment in the country on the whole, which is evidently interconnected with the political stagnation.

The international community and the Council must spare no effort in assisting the Democratic Republic of the Congo to move towards the stability, peace and security that its people deserve. The holding of elections in 2017 remains an important element in that endeavour.

The same applies to accountability. The killings of two members of the Group of Experts must not remain unanswered. We want to express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims present here. Those who committed these crimes have to be brought to justice. In that regard, following the Secretary-General's recent letter on the executive summary of the Board of Inquiry report, we would like to call upon the Secretary-General to act in a swift manner and to establish a respective follow-up mechanism under his own authority, as his predecessor did in response to the Terrain Hotel tragedy in South Sudan.

Finally, in terms of the Committee's modus operandi, we do not understand the situation when recommendations addressed to the Council by the Group of Experts that this very Council has established are prevented from reaching it. We call on all Committee members to work constructively in full cooperation with the Chair and each other to ensure the effective functioning of the body.

Mr. Cardi (Italy) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for your very detailed briefing as Chair of the Committee. I would also like to align myself with my colleagues in addressing the families of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán. On behalf of my Government, I would like to once again pledge our sympathy and solidarity as we join them in their grief. Italy hopes that those responsible for the deaths of the two members of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2293 (2016) will be swiftly brought to justice and tried.

In that connection, and in welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we appeal once again to the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to expeditiously and thoroughly investigate those murders and to cooperate with the investigations carried out by Sweden and the United States. As for the United Nations investigation, following the Secretary-General's letter to the Council, we support the efforts of the Secretary-General to ensure justice and we encourage him to implement an effective follow-up mechanism without delay, after consulting with the Congolese authorities.

Today's meeting seeks to analyse the results of the work of Michael Sharp, Zaida Catalán and their colleagues — precious work that will help us

understand the complexity of the Congolese reality. As you just pointed out in your briefing, Mr. President, the final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/2017/672/Rev.1) provides a detailed analysis of the persistence of negative forces, especially in eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where armed groups foment instability, namely, by exploiting the country's natural resources.

Italy is therefore deeply concerned about that illicit exploitation. As the Security Council has repeatedly mentioned in its resolutions, putting an end to that illegal trafficking is critical to the peace and security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Government in Kinshasa has taken several measures to better secure the supply chain of minerals and to implement a tracking system. We encourage the Government to redouble its efforts, especially with regard to the trafficking of gold, in which, according to the latest report of the Group of Experts, certain members of the Congolese army have been implicated. We therefore urge the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to prosecute them for those illegal activities in order to send a clear message against impunity.

As for imposing sanctions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we are ready to work with the chairmanship of the Committee and to participate in dialogue with regional countries, which, in our view, play a key role in ensuring an effective regime.

Michael and Zaida lost their lives as they were investigating human rights in the greater Kasaï region. For months, the southern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been plunged into a cycle of violence and murder. Italy hopes that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will carry out a swift and transparent investigations to establish the facts and circumstances for the human rights violations and abuses committed in the Kasaïs over recent months. In that regard, while recalling that the Congolese authorities have the primary responsibility of protecting their population, we hope that they can cooperate with the international Group of Experts appointed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The perpetrators of those crimes must be prosecuted and convicted.

At the political level, Italy is concerned about the lack of progress in the implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement, which remains the only credible road map for resolving the crisis and supporting the legitimacy of the transitional institutions. In that connection, we call on the Government and the political forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to rapidly implement the agreement and to ease tensions, in keeping with that agreement. In our view, those are essential steps to organizing democratic and transparent elections. We believe that we must urgently set the electoral timetable and accelerate the preparation of peaceful, credible and inclusive elections — to be held as soon as possible and in accordance with the Congolese Constitution and the agreement I have just referred to.

In conclusion, Italy continues to attach great importance to the rigorous implementation of the sanctions regime. We remain committed to working with the other Council members to renew the regime. The Group of Experts report that has been submitted for our consideration will also serve as a vehicle for honouring the memory of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): I would first like to extend my thanks to Egypt in its capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004). Japan appreciates your leadership and proactive engagement, Sir, including with regional States and organizations.

We join our colleagues in welcoming the final report (see S/2017/672/Rev.1) of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2293 (2016), whose tireless efforts have been vital to the Committee's work. That informative report will play an important role in reviewing and shaping the Democratic Republic of the Congo sanctions regime going forward.

We especially appreciate the dedication of the Group of Experts despite the extremely challenging environment following the loss of two of their colleagues, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp. Zaida and Michael's professional and insightful work contributed significantly to the work of the Group of Experts. Japan would like to once again pay tribute to Zaida and Michael and to extend its deepest condolences to their families, some of whom are here today.

We continue to believe in the importance of a prompt and thorough investigation to bring the perpetrators of those killings to justice, as noted in the Council's recent presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/12). We call on the Secretary-General, in his official capacity, to establish a special follow-up investigation without

delay. We must avoid the recurrence of any such tragedy in the future. Ensuring the security of experts working for the sanctions committees is indispensable for sanctions regimes.

I would underscore that the Democratic Republic of the Congo today stands at a critical juncture, with profound and interlinked political and security concerns. We reiterate to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo the importance of holding peaceful and credible elections, leading to a democratic transfer of power by the end of this year, in line with the 31 December political agreement.

We are also deeply alarmed by the deterioration of the situation in Kasaï and the persistence of insecurity in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including grave human rights violations and intercommunal violence. The political leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must urgently address those concerns.

As Japan stated at the Security Council briefing on United Nations sanctions two weeks ago (see S/PV.8018), sanctions are not tools for punishment, but rather a means to support national efforts to maintain and consolidate peace and stability. Given the political challenges and worsening security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, sanctions have a particularly important role to play in helping to deter, mitigate and end violence. The full and faithful implementation of the sanctions regime, including the recommendations made previously by the Group of Experts, is in the interests of all stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of the international community, including States in the region. Today, 14 years after the establishment of a sanctions regime in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we are still struggling with its lack of implementation. It is therefore essential to ensure that the Committee can revitalize the engagement of all stakeholders and continue working on concrete measures to improve compliance and efficiency. In that regard, we urge the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other relevant countries to continue and enhance their cooperation with the Committee and the Group of Experts.

As the deadline for holding elections by the end of this year approaches, the political and security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is growing increasingly volatile, and may also have a major impact on the entire Great Lakes region. Japan is confident that the Security Council will continue to follow the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region closely. We will remain ready to act promptly if necessary.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's meeting of Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We would like to thank the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) for his detailed briefing on the Democratic Republic of the Congo sanctions regime. We greatly appreciate his leadership of the Committee and share his assessment of what is happening in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. We support his proposal for visiting the country and the region at the end of October. Similar visits have already shown the relevance of that practice.

We would like to express our sincere condolences and sympathy to the family members of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán present here today. They gave their lives while fulfilling their mission in the name of a goal they sincerely believed in — that their work could bring peace to a conflict-torn African country. We believe that their killers and all who were involved in that barbarous incident will be found and punished as they deserve, while we, in memory of Michael and Zaida, should redouble our efforts in working for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sanctions are an important element in the Security Council toolkit. However, such restrictions cannot and should not be an end in themselves. Their job is to help to achieve the political and diplomatic settlement of a conflict. We share the concerns about the worsening situation in the Kasaï provinces, where the escalating confrontation between the authorities and armed tribal groups is alarming. There can be no question that the Government and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should take additional steps to mitigate the situation. However, we would like to warn against any sweeping attempts to blame the Congolese military and police for everything that is happening through an alleged disproportionate use of force. It is the members of the opposition Kamuina Nsapu sect who are responsible for the attacks on Government officials, schools and polling stations and the recruitment of child soldiers. Of course, that should not be an excuse

for human rights violations by any of the parties, who should rather await the results of the authorities' official investigation.

In our view, it is crucial to ensure that all the Congolese parties consistently implement the comprehensive political agreement of 31 December 2016, if stability is to be maintained in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, we would like to note that the modalities of its implementation, as well as any possible corrections to the timing of the elections, are the exclusive prerogative of the Congolese people and should be addressed only through a dialogue between the authorities and the opposition without any outside interference.

We agree with the opinion of Egypt's Permanent Representative that the illegal exploitation of natural resources continues to be one of the main challenges facing not just the Democratic Republic of the Congo but the entire Great Lakes region. And while the financial fuelling of insurgents through this kind of activity is steadily declining, it is essential to ensure that the countries of the region can consolidate their efforts to come up with realistic ways of dealing with the problem. We see good potential in this area for the 1533 Committee's work.

We noted the timeliness of the 1533 Committee's open meeting on 4 August and commend Egypt's efforts in organizing it. At the meeting we looked at the statement by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that the United Nations Mission issued a fraudulent certificate of conformity for exporting Congolese gold, in contravention to the certification procedure for exporting precious metals out of the country. We hope that this issue will be comprehensively investigated.

We took note of the summary in the report circulated to the Council on 15 August (see S/2017/672/Rev.1) on the work of the United Nations Board of Inquiry into the death of the sanctions experts. We would like to draw attention to its first recommendation, which supports the idea of conducting a transparent and comprehensive criminal investigation under the jurisdiction of the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and with the support of Member States. We have been in favour of that format from the very beginning. Our optimism is buttressed by the attitude from Kinshasa, which is already cooperating with the United States investigation and is prepared to do the same with Sweden's representatives.

Lastly, we would like to comment on one of the Group of Experts' recommendations, about extending its mandate by a year and a half owing to the Congolese authorities' tightened security rules. We think this would be counterproductive and could send the wrong message to Kinshasa, as if we had no expectations of seeing rapid improvement in the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We should remember that the sanctions' job is to stimulate political dialogue and that decisions to extend or remove them must be made based on real progress.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): Today we have been discussing the work of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo extended pursuant to resolution 2293 (2016). Tragically, their report (see S/2017/672/Rev.1) comes in the wake of the murder of two United Nations human rights experts, Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán.

I am glad that we are meeting in the open today. This is not an issue to discuss behind closed doors. We owe it to the families of Michael and Zaida, and their interpreter Betu Tshintela, to speak loudly and clearly in the Chamber, express our deepest condolences and reiterate our firm resolve to see their killers brought to justice. That is a message that needs to go far beyond the Chamber — indeed, far beyond the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — because it was we in the Council who asked for the information that Michael and Zaida went to gather. We asked them to be our eyes and ears. Wherever in the world the men and women of the United Nations are murdered, wherever in the world they are harmed and abducted, we cannot stay silent and we cannot stand aside. We must ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes face the fullest consequences of their actions. We need to ensure accountability.

We took the first step to that end through resolution 2360 (2017), with new designation criteria for those who kill United Nations personnel. The Secretary-General took the second step by commissioning a Board of Inquiry, which has uncovered more details. But more needs to be done. I therefore welcome the Secretary-General's call in his letter to the Council for a follow-on mechanism, and we urge him to take action swiftly towards a further investigation so that we can uncover the truth for Zaida and Michael and for the safety of

all United Nations personnel around the globe. Five months after the murder of Michael, Zaida and Betu, accountability is yet to materialize. Those who ordered their killings remain at large.

Zaida and Michael were two of the most pre-eminent experts on the Kasaï regions. Tragically, it appears that their very expertise made them a target. The violence they sought to eliminate was brutally turned against them. Let there be no mistake: they were killed for shining a light on the horrific human rights situation in the Kasaïs, and we must not let that light go out.

First and foremost, that means recognizing the link between the political and security situations. Uncertainty and inertia over the implementation of the 31 December agreement is only fuelling instability and violence. With the Vice-Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo here today, let us all agree that the December agreement must be fully implemented. If implementation continues to falter, we worry about what will happen next. We need only look to the first half of this year and the 430 officially recorded human rights violations linked to the electoral process. That figure is higher than that for the whole of 2015.

As the report of the Group of Experts (see S/2017/672/Rev.1) shows, such violence is fuelling further violence. I am appalled at the reports of child rape in Kavumu. I am glad that some of the militia responsible have been caught and put on trial; that is welcomed. But without political stability, the tide could turn and those positive trends could be reversed.

There are already clear warning signs, such as the growing reports of widespread sexual violence, including by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo in the Kasaïs, of the widespread recruitment of children by the Kamuina Nsapu militia or of continuing violence in the east. We should all be concerned that armed groups continue to fund their hateful crimes by stealing natural resources. Such crimes must stop and those responsible must be held to account.

We need to recognize that we have tools at our disposal to help that happen, such as the sanctions already imposed by the Council. They must be fully implemented if they are to be effective. We also have a responsibility to keep sanctions under close review. Those who engage in or support acts that undermine the peace, stability or security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo can and, if needed, will be sanctioned by the Council. The Human Rights Council international investigative mechanism will also play a crucial role in the Kasaïs. Let us therefore all urge the Democratic Republic of the Congo to cooperate fully with its work.

I would like to thank the Committee that you chair, Sir, for its work and for the report. I would also like to thank you personally for the sensitive and effective way in which you have steered our work.

Finally, we owe it to Zaida, Michael and the rest of the Group of Experts to continue to use their reporting in our decisions. As we have heard so clearly today, it is reporting for which the highest price has been paid and it must not be a price paid in vain.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank you, Sir, for your briefing in your capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We commend the fact that the 1533 Committee, under your leadership, has worked very efficiently and produced excellent results. China will continue to support you in your efforts.

China welcomes the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Okitundu, to the Security Council.

China was concerned over the murder of members of the Group of Experts and would like extend its deepest condolences to the families. The safety of United Nations personnel must be ensured. Any attack on United Nations personnel is unacceptable.

So far this year, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has worked to further the peace process and established the new transitional Government. It has worked actively to strengthen its capacity in the areas of governance and security. China welcomes those efforts. At the same time, however, the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to face various challenges in the political, security and humanitarian spheres, in particular in the eastern part of the country, where armed rebel groups are active. That is one of the main causes of instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region as a whole.

Ensuring the stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an important foundation for furthering the political process and carrying out national reconstruction. It is a pressing task for the international

community to urge all parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular certain opposition parties, to put an immediate end to the violence, continue to be committed to the political process and support the political agreement reached. China commends the active role played by African regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, as well as by neighbouring countries, to find a solution to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We encourage parties in the region to maximize their respective advantages in the quest for a peaceful solution. The Security Council must enhance its coordination efforts in order to send a united and clear message and to forge synergies in the international community.

In order to help resolve the issues in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the international community must fully respect the Government's leading role. Solutions designed by the international community will be effective only when they respect the Government's leadership and the choices of the country's people. To date, the Security Council has adopted various measures, which focus on the illicit activities of the armed groups and have garnered a number of results. At the same time, we must note that sanctions are not an end in themselves; they are a means to an end. They should serve to achieve peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

China appreciates the importance that the Committee attaches to cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and regional organizations. We welcome the Chair's plan to visit the country in October. We hope that the sanctions Committee will continue its consultations and maintain contact with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, as the situation evolves, will examine sanctions measures in a timely manner and play an active role in helping the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to achieve peace and stability in the country on their own.

The Chinese Government has always supported the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, to the extent possible, has provided assistance to the country. China is ready to work with the international community in continuing to play a constructive role for peace, stability and development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation thanks you, Sir, for convening this briefing and presenting us with a detailed report (S/2017/672/Rev.1) on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which you are chairing effectively and objectively.

The Senegalese delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing its appreciation to the Group of Experts for their outstanding work in drafting the report, which was submitted to us. That work is especially precious since it was carried out in particularly difficult and painful circumstances, clouded this past March by the murders of two members of the Group, Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán, whose families are honouring us with their presence at today's briefing. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate to these family members and to the members of the Group our heartfelt condolences, profound sympathy, solidarity and support during this trying time, which they are undergoing. Our same heartfelt feelings go out to the delegations of the United States and Sweden.

I would like to welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His presence is an additional illustration of the resolve of his country to pursue its constructive engagement with the international community, in particular with the security Council, to respond to the security, political, economic, humanitarian, and development challenges, which concern us all.

Today's meeting also makes it possible to highlight the work that the Group of Experts achieved in a particularly difficult environment, marked — as I have just said — not only by the deaths of two of their own, but by the heightened level of threats, particularly security threats.

The decrease in cases of violence linked to the electoral process throughout the country, mentioned in the report, in addition to the progress noted in voter registration are encouraging developments that, by their nature, are conducive to a positive dynamic leading towards peaceful, democratic and transparent elections. In that context, we call once again on the Congolese political stakeholders to resolutely step up their commitment towards a peaceful political transition by consensus that is respectful of the aspirations of the Congolese people within the framework of the rules and

laws of the country. I would nevertheless also like to take this opportunity to urge the international community to provide the Democratic Republic of the Congo the necessary and pledged resources — especially financial resources — with a view to implement the political process launched following the political agreement, which was signed on New Year's Eve 2016.

With regard to the final report of the Group of Experts under consideration, it need be noted that the situation with regard to the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains a matter of concern with the active presence of armed groups, which remain the primary source of insecurity and threats for civilians. Such resilience on the part of those groups, which moreover tend to multiply despite the combined efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, concerns us and reminds us that, in addition to military efforts, methodical and far-reaching work remains to be done so as to cut them off from their main sources of revenue and various outside sources of support.

In that regard, the investigation of the Group of Experts is particularly informative in noting possible contributions by the diaspora to armed groups covered by the sanctions regime through websites. We encourage the Group to continue in that direction so as to establish the scale and extent of those operations and, depending on the situation, make recommendations aimed at ending their financing. In that regard, we would underline that the cooperation of Member States is essential for the full implementation of sanctions, in particular in this specific case.

In that context, the Senegalese delegation would like to point out the resurgence of the ex-Mouvement du 23 mars, detected since mid-January, in order to stress the importance of strengthened regional and subregional cooperation so as to definitively eliminate the threat of that armed group's reconstitution. The same concern arises with regard to the remobilization of the Mai Mai groups involving former combatants who participated in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

As the Group of Experts has recommended, we must also stress the need to assess and recalibrate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, especially with regard to the reintegration component. Indisputably, although the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is primarily responsible for that, the work cannot be properly carried out without the renewed contribution of partners, including MONUSCO — which implies financial, logistical and technical support.

The issue of natural resources play a prominent role in the final report of the Group of Experts and is a recurring theme. In particular, the illegal trade and exportation of natural resources continue to provide considerable income to armed groups and fuel the instability and insecurity in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while, at the same time, financing criminal networks inside and outside of the country. Accordingly, that important issue was the timely subject of a meeting of the Committee pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which you chair, Sir, held on 4 August at your initiative. It was a very informative meeting that allowed for discussion on specific aspects of the sanctions regime with key stakeholders and partners, namely, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the region.

At that meeting, through those exchanges, it became clear that cooperation on the international, regional and subregional levels can and must play a role in the various mechanisms to combat the illegal exploitation and commerce of natural resources, and that the capacity of the region and the Conference must be strengthened so as to implement effective and integrated control and traceability systems. As the report notes, the effectiveness of the traceability systems and the implementation of due diligence rules have halted the aims of armed groups that seek to profit from the exploitation of tin, tantalum and tungsten — the famous three Ts. Henceforth, although the system remains to be perfected in connection with dealing with cases of corruption and fraud, the same efforts and cooperation that were effective in dealing with the three Ts must also serve as a model for the gold-mining sector, which is considered the most lucrative source of income for armed groups and criminal networks.

As we know, trafficking in natural resources is not the only challenge facing us in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. For there is also the illicit trafficking of weapons in violation of the arms embargo, which is one of the main causes of insecurity. In that regard, the solution could also come from

strengthened cooperation on the international level and among countries of the region so as to dismantle the trafficking network and the supply chain of weapons and ammunition to negative forces. Strengthening the capacities of those countries in connection with the storage and management of their arsenals, as well as improving traceability systems, is an important part of the response to those challenges.

With regard to cases of violations of international humanitarian law, my delegation would like to reiterate, as stated in the report, that the unconscionable killing of the two experts mandated by the Security Council constitutes an attack on this body and against the United Nations itself. It is a serious violation of international humanitarian law. Senegal, in the light of its involvement in United Nations peacekeeping operations, can only express its deep concern at the threats to the United Nations personnel on the ground.

In this regard, my country supports the investigative and procedural efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in collaboration with the United Nations and other interested parties, in accordance with Congolese legislation, in order to shed full light on these two murders and to bring the perpetrators to justice. In the same vein, with respect to vulnerability, particularly of women and children, in the prevailing atmosphere of insecurity, especially in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Kasaï region, my delegation recalls the provisions of resolution 2360 (2017), adopted last June, which calls, inter alia, for

> "all those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations or abuses of human rights including those involving violence or abuses against children and acts of sexual and gender-based violence, to be swiftly apprehended, brought to justice and held accountable" (*resolution 2360 (2017), twenty-fifth preambular paragraph*).

In that regard, my delegation wishes to hail and encourage the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, who spoke to us a few days ago about her joint visit with the African Union, highlighting the timeliness of reconciling efforts the United Nations, on the one hand, and the Congolese authorities, on the other, in order to prevent and stop the recruitment and use of children as well as violence, including and sexual violence, perpetrated against them, while combating impunity of perpetrators of such acts (see S/PV.8022).

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): Mr. President, we would like to thank you for convening today's meeting to hear your insightful briefing on the final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2017/672/Rev.1).

We are honoured to have his Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among us and welcome him to our deliberations. We also recognize the presence of the parents of Michael Sharp — Mr. John Sharp and Mrs. Michele Sharp — as well as the mother and sister of Zaida Catalán, Mrs. Maria Moresby and Mrs. Elizabeth Moresby. I would ask them to accept our sincerest and most heartfelt condolences for their tragic and irreplaceable loss. Michael and Zaida made heroic sacrifices by giving their lives for peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We honour their memories by offering our highest commitment to the noble ideals they lived for.

We highly esteem the extensive work of the Committee pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) and commend its leadership and the Group of Experts on the ground as they address the challenges facing the country. Your trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sir, and continuous efforts to maintain a constructive dialogue with the local authorities and regional and international partners make an invaluable contribution to strengthening peace and stability in the region.

On the political front, we are concerned at the increasing popular dissatisfaction with the political process, deepened by the worsening socioeconomic situation and increasing insecurity in Kinshasa and other main urban centres. We encourage the Government and the signatories of the political agreement to make every effort to reach consensus for its implementation and to hold timely, credible and transparent presidential, national and provincial legislative elections. We therefore urge the National Electoral Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to work closely with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to uphold internationally acceptable electoral regulations, engaging all interested sides.

While we see considerably reduced exploitation of and trade in the country's natural resources, we need to close all loopholes in the implementation of the sanctions regimes and overcome the impediments of

corruption and the weakening of State institutions that block our success. The fight against illicit trafficking in natural resources is critical to enabling the Democratic Republic of the Congo to move beyond conflict towards peacebuilding and development.

Concerned with increasing violations of human rights, especially conflict-related sexual violence against women and children, we call for strict monitoring, improved protection services and better law enforcement, with a view to fighting impunity. We therefore need a comprehensive assessment of effective implementation of measures imposed by resolution 2360 (2017), including future engagements with concerned States on the implementation of those measures and recommendations of the monitoring group.

We strongly condemn the activities of all armed groups operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and their violations, especially those involved in attacks on the civilian population, United Nations personnel and humanitarian actors. We therefore call for the comprehensive and voluntary disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement of Congolese and foreign militia for the long-term stability and economic development of the country.

Finally, Kazakhstan, like others, is committed to achieving peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We understand that there is no simple or quick formula for completing all the large-scale tasks of conflict prevention and stabilization. We therefore call for the effective implementation of Security Council resolutions and the political agreement of 31 December 2016.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your briefing in your capacity as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, and thank him for his participation at today's meeting. Like my colleagues before me,

I wish to express my special gratitude for the presence in the Chamber of the mother and father of Michael Sharp and the mother and sister of Zaida Catalán, to whom I wish to reiterate and convey personally the condolences of the Government of Uruguay. The appalling event that ended the lives of the two members of the Group of Experts reminds us of the difficulties and tragedies faced by many victims of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It also reminds us of the constant sacrifices made by all United Nations personnel on the ground, whether they are soldiers, police officers or civilians.

Acts of sacrifice and selflessness, such as those of Zaida and Michael, are worthy of our constant remembrance and our utmost gratitude and respect. Uruguay remains firmly committed to the development of all necessary investigations to identify those responsible for such cowardly acts and closely follows all new developments in the matter. On this point, we take note of the Executive Summary of the United Nations Board of Inquiry transmitted to the Council this week and we encourage Council members to continue to examine in detail the content of the report, in particular the recommendations contained therein.

Mr. President, I would like to acknowledge your outstanding work and the active role you have been playing as the Chair of the 1533 (2004) Committee. Of the various Committee activities that you have mentioned, I would like to highlight in particular its visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo last year, meetings with neighbouring countries and meetings held with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Uruguay encourages you to continue with this work for the rest of the year, and we support your plan to organize another visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the next few months.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the Group of Experts, which, in spite of recently having to deal with extraordinary and very painful circumstances, has once again managed to produce a substantive final report (S/2017/672/Rev.1) that is very helpful for the work of the Committee and the Council. We share the various assessments offered by the Group of Experts. We are concerned about the activity of armed groups, the violations of human rights and the lack of concrete progress in the political process.

In conclusion, Uruguay would like to once again reiterate how urgent it is to fully implement the political agreement of 31 December 2016, in its entirety, in good faith in order to organize peaceful elections that are credible, inclusive and timely, by December at the latest.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your comprehensive briefing and for the excellent work that you have been doing as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also wish to thank you for your comprehensive briefing on its activities as well as those of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are pleased to welcome the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We also acknowledge the presence of the families of Miss Zaida Catalán and Mr. Michael Sharp, the two selfless members of the Group of Experts who were mercilessly killed while on United Nations duty. We take this opportunity to once again pay tribute to them for their courage and dedication in discharging their duties under extremely challenging circumstances that, unfortunately, cost them their lives. We express our deepest condolences to the families for their tragic loss and hope that everything possible will be done to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice. In this regard, we take note of the findings and recommendations of the Board of Inquiry, and we look forward to the discussion on the matter next week.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is indeed facing enormous challenges. Political tensions persist in relation to the implementation of the December 2016 agreement although there is still hope that it can pave the way for the holding of elections and the end of the transition period. As the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/672/Rev.1) indicates, the proliferation of violence in different parts of the country continues to erode State authority, weaken institutions and hamper the socioeconomic development of the country, which, in effect, prolongs the situation of conflict. However, we realize that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is very complex. The African Union and the countries of the region have an enormous responsibility to assist the country to regain peace and full stability. That can be done provided the other challenges are also addressed.

The negative activities of the armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been fuelled by the illegal exploitation of the mineral resources of the country, especially gold and diamonds, which suffer from a lack of traceability. In this connection, there is a need to vigorously monitor the incidence of fraudulent use of gold and diamond exports, as well as the illegal taxation of local populations. The open briefing held on 4 August on the illicit exploitation of national resources was indeed very relevant to the Committee. The work of the Group of Experts on this matter will continue to be extremely vital.

The human rights and humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as so many colleagues have mentioned, is no doubt also of serious concern. Various forms of violence are being committed against civilians, particularly women and children, in the Kivus, Kasaï and Tanganyika regions. The briefing received from the Presidential Adviser on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the informal consultations held by the Committee with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict were very important.

In general we appreciate the work that the Committee and the Group of Experts have been doing to try to address the many difficult and complex challenges facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to promote peace and stability in the country. In this regard the continuous efforts being made to consult with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and countries of the region, including within the framework of the Peace and Security Council, as well as to forge greater synergy and cooperation with other regional and international partners is commendable.

We take note of the Chair's intention to visit the Democratic Republic of the Congo in October, and we hope the visit will provide an opportunity to understand the current dynamics and facilitate the implementation of the various measures outlined in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Let me conclude by assuring the Chair of the Committee of Ethiopia's continued support and cooperation to him in the effective discharge of his responsibilities.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Mr. President, my delegation wishes to acknowledge your work as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo and thanks you for your briefing on the Committee's work.

My delegation would also like to welcome His Excellency, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Léonard She Okitundu.

Bolivia welcomes and highlights the work of the Group of Experts for their efforts to promote lasting peace and stability in this brotherly country, in accordance with the provisions of the Council. We recognize and extend our deepest sympathy to Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán, the experts who lost their lives in the fulfilment of their duties. We express our condolences to and solidarity with their families, who are present at this meeting.

We are concerned about the lack of results in the investigation, which should provide the information necessary to identify those responsible for that tragic crime, so that they may be tried and punished by the competent courts.

Bolivia takes into consideration that the challenges faced by both the Group of Experts and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have increased exponentially. Both face the violence of local armed groups that, according to the final report of the Group of Experts (S/2017/672/Rev.1), has started up again. Moreover, they face foreign armed groups that maintain alliances with local groups, encouraging the recruitment of new and ex-combatants, and putting at risk the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Furthermore, the Group of Experts has identified that, although the mechanism to track minerals such as tin, tantalum and tungsten has prevented the benefits of mining from going to armed groups, there are still deficiencies in its implementation. We therefore encourage the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue to work on the effective operation of this mechanism.

The report also points out that the gold sector does not have a tracking mechanism; as such there is no effective monitoring of the trade in this mineral, which facilitates contraband and generates illegal financial flows that are later legitimized. Bolivia reiterates the need to fight against tax havens that allow the integration of illicit gains into the world financial system.

The challenges of managing natural resources are reflected in the history and the current situation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such resources are among the factors that influence the prolongation and changing dynamics of the conflict, which are reflected in the fragmentation of armed groups that operate in an increasingly coordinated manner, with humanitarian consequences for populations that, in many cases, are forced to abandon their homes.

Bolivia expresses its concern over the systematic looting of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by armed groups, some members of the armed forces and multinational companies that exploit areas rich in diamonds and gold without oversight. Monitoring areas rich in natural resources and their sovereign administration is critical to promoting a cessation of hostilities and economic development.

When a country maintains effective control of its resources and there is political, it is possible to undertake a structural change leading to stabilization and the strengthening of the rule of law. The lack of control over natural resources, added to political instability, are challenges that should be resolved in the first instance by the Congolese people. In that respect, it is important to work to harmonize and coordinate the efforts of all actors in respect of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

With respect to the effectiveness of the sanctions regime, Bolivia believes that the latter should not be an end in themselves. Sanctions should be used as the last resource following a failure to implement the provisional measures set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, and should be imposed only when there is a threat to international peace and security or an act of aggression. Bolivia also believes that the design and preparation of sanctions must be regulated by just and transparent procedures, allowing the clear establishment of the conditions required of the States or parties on which they are imposed. These measures should be subject to periodic evaluations that allow a balance to be struck between their effects and the adjustments necessary to modify them in connection with the evolution of the situation.

We stress that the only entity encharged with this task is the Security Council, which must do so with the aim of improving the desired results and to guarantee the maintenance of international peace and security. The tendency to implement and impose unilateral sanctions seriously jeopardises multilateralism and threatens the international order, undermining the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

We believe that the commendable initiatives undertaken by the African Union Peace and Security Council, in the framework of the strategic concept for the joint operations of the Group of Five for the Sahel, could be replicated in Central Africa. The Group addresses terrorism and transnational organized crime by operating in border areas, based on a strategy and an institutional framework supported by the international community. We believe that this is a viable option worthy of consideration.

With respect to the political agreement signed on 31 December 2016 between the Government and the opposition, Bolivia commends the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Maman Sambo Sidikou, to implement the agreement, including the meeting held with the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Bolivia encourages the efforts to build consensus in the Rassemblement des forces politiques et sociales de la République démocratique du Congo and the Majorité présidentielle. We call on the parties to engage in inclusive dialogue focused on respect for the Congolese Constitution, taking into account the points of view of all and including the establishment of the follow-up mechanism and the implementation of confidence-building measures. The best tribute we can pay to Michael and Zaida is to continue to work for peace, stability and development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. She Okitundu (Democratic Republic of the Congo): (*spoke in French*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month of August 2017, and to welcome, through you, the friendly country of Egypt, with which the Democratic Republic of the Congo has enjoyed excellent relations for many years. I thank you for this opportunity to address the Council at this meeting, which is considering the final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2017/672/Rev.1).

I also take this opportunity to express to the Security Council the recognition of the people and Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the support and assistance they receive from the United Nations and, more specifically, from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

Lastly, allow me to express my delegation's appreciation to the Group of Experts, which continues to devote itself courageously and tirelessly to the cause of my country. The quality of its work, despite some shortcomings linked to human nature, deserves to be highly praised.

This is also the place to offer a solemn thought in memory of the two United Nations experts, Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán, who were murdered in the central Kasaï region. The Government of my country and the Congolese people as a whole strongly condemn this despicable act, and I want to reassure the United Nations that the perpetrators of this crime will be severely punished.

I cannot continue my statement without addressing myself to the parents of Michael and Zaida, who are in the Chamber. On behalf of the Government of my country, I would like to convey our deeply shared grief for the immense loss of the dear ones whom they have loved and whom nothing in the world can replace. Our Government and our people wish to express our compassion for the misfortune that has struck them and reiterate our deepest condolences. Michael and Zaida certainly worked in the service of the United Nations, but also indirectly in that of my country, to which they rendered valuable services by traveling across its territory to denounce all obstacles to peace. They did their work not only with passion, but also with love. They paid with their lives so that the troubled regions of my country might find peace. Our duty, in honouring their memories and giving meaning to their sacrifice, requires us to pool our efforts so that the peace they so fervently desired and sought becomes a reality for our people as a whole.

I take note of the essential nature of the final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and thank you, Sir, for the briefing you have just given. I should have liked to limit my remarks to the content of the report alone, but the Council's attention to the situation in my country requires me to speak on a number of questions that will surely be of interest to its members. In that context, I shall briefly review the political situation, the electoral process, the

security situation in general and particularly in the Kasaï region, as well as human rights issues.

The political situation, as members know, remains dominated by the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016. Indeed, under the aforementioned agreement, a Government of national unity led by the opposition is already at work. Internal disagreements within certain political parties of the opposition, inherent in any political process, in no way detract from the Government's legality resulting from its investiture by the National Parliament. Moreover, the recent seating of the members of the National Council for Oversight of the Agreement and the imminent adoption of the law on the organization and functioning of that body will enable the process under way to continue its progress towards the organization of elections. In this regard, it should be noted that operations to update the electoral register have developed to our satisfaction. Indeed, out of the expected 42 million voters, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) has already registered more than 39 million, that, 90 per cent of the total number.

In the provinces of Kasaï, which have suffered heavy human and material losses as a result of the crimes and violence perpetrated by the terrorist militia Kamuina Nsapu, the deployment of equipment, with the support of MONUSCO, and the training of electoral agents have already begin. Registration operations themselves will begin by the end of this month. As soon as the enrollment process is completed, the Government will request the urgent consideration of the revision of the electoral law and the review of the distribution of seats at the next parliamentary session.

My delegation wishes to reassure the Council that the elections will indeed take place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in accordance with the electoral calendar to be published by the CENI. It goes without saying that, in accordance with the agreement of 31 December 2016, the CENI, the National Council for Oversight of the Agreement and the Government will shortly evaluate the progress of the preparations to assess the exact period of the three scheduled elections: the presidential, national legislative and provincial legislative elections.

With regard to the security aspect, the report under review highlights the continued presence of some foreign and national armed groups in the eastern part of our country. To address this situation, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), with the support of MONUSCO, is pursuing military operations against these groups. With particular reference to Allied Democratic Forces, it should be noted that since the dismantling of their main bastions, their operational capacities have substantially decreased. A certain lull has thus been observed in what was their range of operation.

With regard to the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, my delegation considers it important to recall the case of the 340 combatants of that negative force who voluntarily surrendered to the FARDC three years ago. As Council members know, these fighters remain to this day in transit sites at Kanyabayonga in North Kivu, Walungu in South Kivu and Kisangani in Tshopo. The repeated appeals to the international community for their repatriation to their countries of origin or resettlement in a third country outside the countries of the Great Lakes region have so far received no favourable response. My Government calls once again on the international community, which has always insisted on the eradication of that negative force, to become involved in order to achieve a definitive solution.

It seems to me important to recall here also the situation of the combatants of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition, which MONUSCO has confined to Munigi in North Kivu and Dungu in Haut-Uélé. My country, which wishes to live in peace and maintain good relations with South Sudan, also calls on the United Nations to assume its responsibility to resolve this situation by repatriating these ex-combatants to their country or facilitating their settlement in another host country.

As regards former members of the Mouvement du 23 mars, it should be noted that they continue, in violation of the Addis Ababa Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region and the Nairobi Declaration, to freely engage in their political and military activities in the neighbouring countries to which they have fled. My Government has never ceased to denounce the bad faith of these ex-rebels. It condemns their military activism and calls once again to the attention of the Council the need to consider imposing sanctions on the leadership of that movement. My Government reaffirms its determination to continue to fulfil its commitments and calls on other parties concerned to do the same for

sake of the stability of my country and of the region as a whole.

In addition to all this, I must point out that the illegal exploitation and plundering of natural resources are also among the causes of the armed conflict and instability that persist in the east of my country. My Government has undertaken efforts to reverse this situation, in particular by clearing mining sites and setting up a national commission against mining fraud. It will be agreed that these efforts alone are not enough to end this situation. It is therefore important for the neighbouring countries and the international community to join in these efforts. My country is asking the United Nations to take appropriate steps to develop a sanctions mechanism for defaulting States, including suspension or embargoes on trade in minerals, similar to the measures taken under the Kimberley Process.

I cannot close this chapter without mentioning the case of the terrorist insurgents Kamuina Nsapu. This mystical-religious movement was born in August 2016 in the territory of Dibaya, in the province of Central Kasaï, following a conflict over customary power created by a certain Jean Prince Pandi, alias Kamuina Nsapu, who had declared himself to be atraditional chef. He died on 12 August 2016 in clashes between his militia and the security forces. His followers, who spread terror and death in the provinces of Central Kasaï, Kasaï, Kasaï Oriental and Lomami, used civilians, especially children and women, as human shields after drugging them. They gather in small groups to attack public buildings that symbolize the authority of the State, such as police stations, army facilities, administrative and CENI offices, as well as the infrastructure of the Catholic Church.

Today, the authority of the State is virtually restored throughout that part of the national territory. Particularly after the tour carried out by the Head of State to reassure the populations of all the affected provinces of Kasaï. The major remaining challenge is of a humanitarian nature, related to internally and externally displaced persons, whose management requires the urgent mobilization of all partners for substantial assistance.

In discussing the Kamuina Nsapu militia, I believe it would be appropriate to give a brief overview of the progress of investigations in the provinces affected by that phenomenon. Following a deterioration of the situation, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, in his address to both Houses of Parliament in Congress, expressed his resolve to restore State authority in that part of the country, stressing that the crimes committed by militiamen against peaceful citizens, law enforcement officials and the United Nations could not go unpunished and that their perpetrators, who are the subject of judicial investigations, should be punished in accordance with the law. In order to give effect to his word, he signed orders setting up an operational sector in Grand Kasaï and instructed the Minister of Justice to take prompt steps to ensure that competent prosecutors and prosecutors could initiate investigations where nothing had yet been done, so that justice could be restored to the victims. The Minister of Justice was also instructed to expedite the investigations under way som as to ensure that justice was rendered as soon as possible in the areas where the militia continued to operate under the Kamuina Nsapu label.

With regard to the allegations of serious human rights violations against the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo in the Kasaï area, a National Board of Inquiry, led by senior military magistrates, was created by the Government to shed light on this situation. It was in that context that the Auditor General announced the arrest of seven soldiers suspected of war crimes by murder; war crimes by mutilation; war crimes by cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment; and denial of an offense committed by individuals or military jurisdictions, committed in the Mwanza Lomba massacre in Bena Tshikasu. The incriminated persons were convicted in the first degree following public hearings.

As for the mass graves, the joint MONUSCO auditor-military investigations and audits are continuing.

Regarding the deaths of two United Nations experts, the events leading to their assassination took place in Bunkonde, a town 100 kilometres from Kananga, the capital of Central Kasaï province. Initiated by the Auditor General of the Congolese armed forces, the investigation into the murder of these two experts led to the identification of 16 suspects, 9 of whom are already in detention. Nineteen hearings have already taken place, while the next, devoted to a visit to the scene of the murder, is scheduled for August 21.

In these investigations, Congolese justice is already working with the United Nations. As part of this collaboration, MONUSCO provides logistical

assistance to the military prosecutor. In the same vein, three international experts of Senegalese, Canadian and Mauritanian nationality, were recently appointed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with resolution 35/33 of 23 June 2017 of the Human Rights Council, in agreement with the Congolese Government. These will be assisted by 19 international experts and experts from the African Union.

It goes without saying that these experts must be deployed in strict compliance with the terms of reference established in the resolution of the Human Rights Council, namely, that the deployment must be in the framework of assistance provided to the investigations carried out the Congolese military justice system. In the same spirit of openness and transparency, we note the excellent technical cooperation between the judicial authorities of my country and the experts from the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, at the request of the American authorities.

As regards Sweden's request for cooperation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I should like to reassure the Council that, just as we have been ready to cooperate with the American authorities, the Congolese Government agrees to cooperate with Sweden in the investigations being conducted by the Congolese judiciary, despite the fact that we do not have a formal mutual legal assistance convention between our two countries. The Minister of Justice has informed the Swedish Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on this point. The Prosecutor General of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will agree on the practical modalities for partnership \with his Swedish counterpart, through appropriate letters rogatory.

In this tragic situation, my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has suffered much loss of life. Law enforcement officers and officials of the CENI, administrative and customary authorities have been beheaded. Ruthless militia have killed women, men and children. All these innocent victims deserve justice. That is why the Government of my country will spare no effort to ensure that the perpetrators of all these crimes are arrested and punished.

Before concluding, allow me to express the position of my Government on two of the recommendations formulated by the experts, as contained in the report before us. I refer specifically to the recommendation on the establishment of an independent international investigation into the murder of the two experts and that requesting the extension of the Group's mandate to 30 December 2018.

My Government does not think it is a good idea to set up such an inquiry in that, in accordance with 35/33 of the Human Rights Council and for reasons of transparency, we are already cooperating with established United Nations mechanisms and with the inquiries being conducted by the appropriate authorities of the countries of origin of the two victims. As to the request for an extension of the terms of reference of the Group of Experts, my Government considers that this issue has already been resolved in resolution 2360 (2017) of 21 June, which extended the mandate of the Group until 1 August 2018.

I would like to conclude by expressing my gratitude to the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the work he has done since he assumed his post. I would also like to thank the Group of Experts for its commitment and determination in the exercise of its mandate. To all members of the Council, I reiterate the gratitude of the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8027

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8027th meeting
Friday, 18 August 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
	Ukraine	Mr. Fesko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-26241 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Tribute to the victims of the terrorist attack in Barcelona, Spain

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I should like to condemn in the strongest terms the unconscionable terrorist attack in Barcelona, Spain, which targeted innocent civilians. The members of the Security Council express their deepest condolences to the families of those killed and their sympathy to the people and the Government of Spain. I ask Council members now to rise in a minute of silence for the victims.

The members of the Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdulmalik Al-Mikhlafi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Yemen.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen.

Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed is joining the meeting via video-teleconference from Amman.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien: This is my tenth statement on Yemen to the Chamber since I took up my post in June 2015, only a few months after the crisis in Yemen had escalated. I have visited the country three times during my tenure — Aden twice, Ibb, Sana'a, by mountainous road to to Hudaydah city and port, Amran, and in an attempt to get to Taiz, which was aborted after being caught up in gunfire. Wherever and whatever side of this horrific fight, and above all for those of neither side caught up in this maelstrom of fear, death and destruction, I have been deeply moved by the terrible human suffering everywhere in Yemen.

It grieves me that in these past two years, and despite my and my team's best efforts, I have been unable to report any significant improvement in the deplorable, avoidable and completely man-made catastrophe that is ravaging the country. On the contrary, the Yemeni people's suffering has relentlessly intensified. Today, millions of people in Yemen are facing a triple tragedy: the spectre of famine, the world's largest ever single-year cholera outbreak, and the daily deprivation and injustice of a brutal conflict that the world is allowing to drag on and on — all totally preventable, avoidable and treatable. This human tragedy is deliberate and wanton; it is political tragedy, but with will and with courage, which are both in short supply, it is stoppable.

The impact of this conflict on the basic needs and dignity of ordinary Yemenis every day is clear. We have been over the harrowing figures time and again in the Chamber. Seventeen million Yemenis do not know if or where they will get their next meal; nearly 7 million are facing the threat of famine; and nearly 16 million lack access to water or sanitation. With numbers of this scale, there is a pernicious risk that we may become mired in a statistical fog or that we may begin to take an overly technical view of this crisis, almost as if it were a natural phenomenon. It is not.

We must remember that these figures represent human faces and enormous suffering — parents unable to feed their families, children succumbing to malnutrition or disease, and countless other tragedies. They represent the heart-breaking story of a six-year-old girl — and her only dignity left is that I have been asked not to give her name — whose family spent six months sleeping in a hole in the ground at night in order to avoid air strikes near their home. This little girl was already suffering from malnutrition, and her condition became severe while hiding with her family. After several rounds of treatment she was recovering, only to contract and die of acute watery diarrhoea shortly after her release from hospital.

For the sake of that innocent child and countless others, the appalling statistics of this crisis must not obscure the central fact that Yemen's catastrophe

is completely man-made. It is a direct result of the deliberate policies, tactics and actions of the parties and their powerful proxies to the conflict, and it is completely preventable.

Before the escalation of conflict, Yemen was making progress against its long-standing challenges, not least the kleptocracy under which it was ruled and its people exploited for so long. In 2014, fewer people were going hungry than three years earlier. Nutrition was improving with fewer children stunted or underweight. School enrolment was rising. All of that has now been sharply reversed, and with that reversal has come the near total collapse of public institutions that would otherwise help Yemenis to cope. Today, only 45 per cent of health facilities are fully functioning. Sanitation systems have mostly ground to a halt. Approximately 1.2 million public employees, including 30,000 health workers and 193,000 teachers, have been paid erratically or not at all since October 2016, thereby accelerating the decline in essential services and depriving nearly a quarter of the population — civil servants and their families — of a reliable income. We see the consequences of that collapse in people's rising needs across all sectors, and perhaps most dramatically in the current cholera outbreak, which has spread rapidly across Yemen in the wake of degraded sanitation systems and shattered health facilities.

The conduct of the war continues to be really vicious and brutal, with frequent complete disregard for international humanitarian law, principles or just the basic norms of human behaviour. Even wars have rules, and even wars have their limits, or at least they should have. Earlier this month, reported air strikes in Sa'dah killed 12 civilians and injured 10 others. The death toll included six children killed in their family home. Investigations continue, although we know already that only the Saudi-led coalition has the means to carry out aerial attacks. In Taiz indiscriminate shelling into populated areas continues as a grotesque feature of the conflict, mostly by forces affiliated with the Houthis or former President Saleh. Over the past two years, those incidents have reportedly killed or injured dozens of civilians, including children, and damaged civilian infrastructure.

In the absence of accountability mechanisms or a concerted push by Member States for a political settlement, the violence is intensifying. During 2017, the number of air strikes per month has been three times higher than it was the previous year, and monthly reports of armed clashes have increased by more than 50 per cent. All that has been said and the outrage that has been expressed here around the Security Council table have only produced a dramatically worse situation perpetrated by the stubborn, brutal parties and their proxies to this cynical and inhuman man-made catastrophe.

Parties to the conflict and their proxies also continue to restrict the flow of essential commercial and humanitarian supplies and staff. Yemen imports more than 90 per cent of its staple food and nearly all medicine and fuel, which is urgently needed to pump clean drinking water and run hospital generators. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) was established in May 2016 to facilitate critical commercial imports, yet the Government of Yemen and the coalition at times bypass UNVIM by unilaterally denying or excessively delaying entry to vessels carrying essential cargo. Member States must determinedly do more to champion that mechanism. It is simply wrong to insist that those cargos go to Aden and not to Hudaydah.

The cruel and baseless closure of Sana'a airport to civilian traffic by the Saudi-led coalition is another restriction blocking thousands of Yemenis from travelling abroad for medical care. Commercial flights served Sana'a in the first year of the conflict, and I do not see why they should not immediately resume, at the very least, for humanitarian cases. It was said recently that the Yemen Government could see no raison why Sana'a airport should open as there were flights to Aden and road access to Sana'a.

I flew on the first United Nations Humanitarian Air Service flight to Aden. I have been talking to the truck drivers on that route. That is not a real solution with regard to the quantities and urgency even approaching the scale of the human emergency that we are trying to overcome despite such nasty, cynical machinations supported by parties to the conflict and their proxies where there is complete lock-down control of the airspace. Let us be clear that it is a fact that most of the need is in the northern and not the southern part of Yemen. It is a fact that Sana'a and Hudaydah and not Aden best serve the north.

I therefore also call on all parties to the conflict and their proxies to ensure that humanitarian staff can quickly enter Yemen and to avoid any bureaucratic or administrative requirements that may unduly hinder

the rapid delivery of assistance or delay the deployment of aid workers. Once in Yemen, critical commercial or humanitarian supplies and staff must be able to move to their destination nearest to the human needs of the most vulnerable without interference. Too often, the de facto authorities in Sana'a or local officials in areas under their control block, delay or otherwise interfere with humanitarian action. Those restrictions are especially prevalent in front-line areas, thereby preventing or delaying partners from reaching the most vulnerable. Local officials in areas controlled by Sana'a de facto authorities, at times, also seek to influence the selection of beneficiaries. We have also seen repeated incidents of aid diversion in areas under the control of Sana'a de facto authorities, especially in Taiz governorate.

At a time when Yemen is facing the real near threat of famine, local authorities in areas controlled by Sana'a de facto authorities have also hindered humanitarian assessment missions that are needed so as to establish the necessary evidence base for humanitarian assistance. Despite my repeated calls to the de facto authorities in Sana'a to facilitate imports of armoured vehicles and other equipment critical to humanitarian action, progress remains painfully slow. Many of those incidents are eventually resolved through discussions with the de facto authorities, but the time lost represents an unacceptable burden for people who desperately need help, and directly causes avoidable death.

Humanitarian partners continue to reach the most vulnerable people through a well-led, principled and coordinated response despite extraordinary challenges. More than 120 partners have assisted 5.9 million people this year in every governorate of Yemen through United Nations-coordinated humanitarian action. The cholera response has established 222 treatment centres and 926 oral rehydration points across the country. Despite those achievements, partners are struggling with funding shortages. The Yemen humanitarian response plan has received only 39 per cent of its revised requirements of $2.3 billion for 2017 although we are already two thirds of the way through the year. I stress that we now urgently need Member States and other partners to provide full funding to the humanitarian response plan. There is no time to lose, and even if all the fighting and the restrictions were stopped within the next hour, we would continue to need that amount. Let us be clear that the sum of $2.3 billion is not an inflated negotiating number. It is a careful and collective best estimate of the cost of meeting the needs of Yemenis that the parties and their proxies either do not want or do not care for them to get.

Humanitarian action alone cannot and should not replace the commercial or public sectors in Yemen, nor can it resolve the underlying crisis. An end to the violence, a cessation in hostilities and a sustainable political agreement are the building blocks of Yemen's peaceful future. But while those are being sought, humanitarians must be able to carry out their work and provide aid and support to the millions of Yemeni people in desperate need. The international community must take meaningful action. I renew my call for the Council's support not only with additional funding, but to address the following points.

First, we must ensure that all ports — land, sea and air — are open to civilian — including commercial — traffic. This includes supporting UNVIM, lifting restrictions on commercial imports, immediately re-opening Sana'a airport and allowing delivery of desperately needed mobile cranes to Hudaydah port, which handles some 70 per cent of imports into Yemen and is the closest port of entry to the majority of people who need humanitarian assistance. The Council must not be swayed or deterred by those saying Aden — or other ports — is good enough.

Secondly, we must influence parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian and human rights law. This entails all Member States using all possible means of leverage and influence to ensure that the parties and their proxies protect civilians and infrastructure, respecting the fundamental rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution. It also includes facilitating entry of life-saving supplies into Yemen and their rapid distribution without interference. I would like to be clear: of course, the evidence is being gathered to hold hideous breaches of international humanitarian law to account one day.

Thirdly, civil servant salaries must be paid. Recent funding in support of essential services is a temporary measure that will shore up some services in priority locations. But only full payment of civil servant salaries across the country — a basic obligation of the State — will halt institutional collapse. This collapse is in no one's interest and it exacerbates all the death, disease and human damage.

Fourthly, accountability must be strengthened. More broadly, there must be accountability for the appalling conduct of this entire war. We must not get hung up on

the semantics of who is a party, who is a proxy and who denies being involved. All the perpetrators and their facilitators of this hideous Yemen war know who they are. The evidence of their conduct is being gathered, preserved and prepared for holding each and all to account, to seek to avert the abominable confidence that the sense of impunity is currently motivating them to perpetrate this horror on the Yemeni people. We therefore welcome all steps towards improving this accountability. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has rightly called for the creation of an international independent body to investigate alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. I urge the Human Rights Council to act on this call.

Fifthly, we must demand an immediate cessation of hostilities, a return to negotiations and a political settlement. Parties to the conflict have brought ruin and deprivation to millions of Yemenis for more than two years. There is no military solution to this conflict, and the international community must push for a political settlement based on peaceful negotiations, and, indeed, compromises. Not to admit that fact is to deliberately condemn many more Yemeni people — girls, boys, women and men — to death, damage, fear and hopelessness in this deliberate, man-made human catastrophe.

On this day, of all days, World Humanitarian Day, I straight-forwardly ask members of the Security Council: how much shame can we all, members of the Council in particular, keep accepting on our failure to rein in the parties and proxies to this heinous war and to start meeting the needs and the legitimate hopes that every Yemeni person should be allowed to have and that we would demand as the very minimum for each and every one of us?

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. O'Brien for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed (*spoke in Arabic*): Yemen today continues to traverse a critical and agonizing period, as civilians pay a terrible price in an unending power struggle. Those who survive the fighting face death by famine or disease, as the economic situation continues to deteriorate and the humanitarian conditions worsens.

Military clashes have continued in several governorates around the country. On 4 August, according to several field reports, an air strike in the Madha area of Sa'dah governorate resulted in the death of eight civilians. On 20 August, another air strike on the Mawza district of Taiz killed more than 20 civilians. Houthi forces and forces loyal to Ali Abdullah Saleh continued to shell residential areas in Taiz, inflicting heavy losses among civilians who have already been subjected to much hardship over the past two years. In addition, several ballistic missiles have been launched into Saudi Arabia.

There were also reports of attacks on ships in Mokha port. Those attacks are a further evidence of the increasing threat to maritime security in the Red Sea. This threat puts the much-needed humanitarian and commercial supplies in peril.

We have also observed continued hostilities along the Yemeni-Saudi borders as well as in Hajjah, Midi and Ma'rib. Fighting escalated in western Taiz, around the Khalid Bin Al Walid camp and the Taiz-Al Hudaydah road. Moreover, forces of the Government of Yemen, backed by the United Arab Emirates and United States Special Forces, have launched a military offensive in Shabwa targeting Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula fighters. I reiterate that the longer the conflict goes on, the higher the risk that terrorist groups will spread and the stronger their influence will become.

Uncontrolled migration to Yemen through the Gulf of Aden has continued relentlessly with tragic consequences. On 9 and 10 August, the International Organization for Migration reported that more than 41 migrants died after they had been forced by traffickers to abandon the boats and jump into the sea off the coast of Shabwa.

In brief, death looms for Yemenis by air, land and sea. Diseases and epidemics are at unprecedented levels, as the Council has just heard from the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, my colleague, Mr. Stephen O'Brien. I would like to commend Stephen for the role he has played. Since this is his last meeting with the Security Council on Yemen, I would also like to commend him for his courage and continued support for and visits to the most dangerous country in the world.

Those who have survived cholera will continue to suffer the consequences of what I call the "political cholera" that infects Yemen and continues to obstruct

the road towards peace. Over the last few weeks, I have visited Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. In these visits, I met with several Ministers for Foreign Affairs as well as other senior officials from Yemen and the region. There is still consensus on the need to reach a political solution for the Yemeni crisis and to support the United Nations-sponsored peace process under the auspices of the Secretary-General. The international community is unified in support of a peaceful settlement, but the parties to the conflict continue to miss this opportunity. Certain parties continue to take advantage of internal divisions and place personal interests ahead of the urgent need for peace in Yemen.

The political tensions in Yemen continue to undermine the State institutions on which many Yemenis depend. Immediate measures are needed to stop the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and save the country from further violence, epidemics, famine and other preventable and controllable crises. We are currently urging the parties to agree to measures that will preserve the country's vital institutions and help, in the first phase, to secure the continued flow of humanitarian aid, pay salaries to civil servants and bring the smuggling of weapons under control.

The proposal seeks to ensure the safe and uninterrupted functioning of the port of Hudaydah, which is presently a key artery for the entire Yemeni economy. It includes a practical plan to hand over the port to a committee of respected Yemenis with security and the economic expertise, who would be working under United Nations guidance and oversight. The committee would work to prevent the smuggling of weapons and ensure the safety and security of the port's operations and infrastructure. The committee would also ensure the smooth flow of humanitarian and commercial goods through the port to all parts of Yemen, as well as the transfer of port revenues to support the resumption of salary payments to civil servants.

In parallel, we are working with the parties on reopening Sana'a International Airport to commercial flights. That is a vital and fundamental component of the proposals, as it would make it possible for the wounded and sick to seek treatment abroad and permit students to continue their studies outside of Yemen. It would also ease imports and exports and improve the conditions of Yemeni citizens. There should also be immediate steps to reopen roads to and from Taiz for humanitarian and commercial supplies, as many representatives of Taiz civil society have demanded. The denial of access to basic goods for the people of Taiz has gone on too long. Ensuring freedom of movement for civilians is required by international humanitarian law, but is also called for out of respect for the long-standing values of solidarity and compassion of Yemeni society.

Those initiatives should contribute to the rebuilding of confidence between the parties and serve as a first step towards a new national cessation of hostilities and the resumption of discussions for a full and comprehensive solution consisting of security and political components based on the Kuwait talks. I know that Yemenis are demanding those steps, and I hope that the parties to the conflict will embrace them as soon as possible.

I met with the President of Yemen, Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, a few days ago, and we discussed the ideas and proposals that I presented. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates expressed their full support for my proposals, which also received backing from the Gulf Cooperation Council and the League of Arab States.

Last month — and I informed members of this following my open briefing last month (see S/PV.7999) — I received a letter from Ansar Allah and the General People's Congress in which they reaffirmed the need to build upon what was discussed in the Kuwait talks. I have invited them to meet with me in a third country in order to discuss those proposals and turn them into an agreement that includes concrete steps to avoid further bloodshed and alleviate human suffering. I hope they will commit to join those meetings as soon as possible. Every day we spend lingering without serious action towards a solution means more destruction and greater loss of life.

Yemen's path towards peace is clear, and actionable proposals are ready that will yield tangible benefits and serve to build confidence between the parties. International support for a full and comprehensive solution and for the efforts of the United Nations is unwavering. What is missing at this point is for the parties to the conflict — without any delays, excuses or procrastination — to demonstrate their determination to end the war and put the national interests above any personal gains.

Placing blame on the United Nations, the Special Envoy or the international community will not make peace. Postponement and posturing for the media do not end the war, but only serve to deepen the rift in the country. A solid foundation for peace needs to be built from within Yemeni society. A society at peace, with competent and responsive institutions, will be built only through partnership and inclusiveness and policies that respond to the demands of the people throughout the country, from north to south. Those aspirations will need to be reflected in a constitution that protects all citizens — youth, children, men and women — from all political and ideological backgrounds.

Those who want peace should find solutions, not search for pretexts. It is no secret that there are many merchants of war in Yemen who do not want peace. We will continue to work with Yemenis, including human rights groups, women's groups and civil society, to mainstream the language of peace and reach a political solution that provides safety and stability to the Yemeni people, who deserve no less.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Stephen O'Brien, as well as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, for their informative and exhaustive briefings. I would also like to welcome and thank Mr. Abdulmalik Al-Mikhlafi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen, for his presence in the Chamber.

Uruguay recognizes the intense work being done by the staff and institutions involved in humanitarian assistance activities in Yemen, which provide aid to millions of people in need and carry out that praiseworthy task in very hostile conditions.

We commend the Egyptian presidency for having convened this meeting, which lends visibility to the tragic situation in Yemen — one from which we all hope that country will soon emerge. This meeting also gives greater transparency to the work of the Security Council.

Because tomorrow marks the observance of World Humanitarian Day, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for its "Not a Target" campaign, which we support enthusiastically. We would also like to highlight today the fact that schools and hospitals are not a target. Civilians are not a target. And humanitarian workers are not a target. Humanitarian workers in every conflict know that they have our respect and admiration.

Uruguay sees no solution to the bloody conflict in Yemen other than one of a negotiation process in which all parties involved participate, that is conducted by Yemenis themselves and that leads to a political solution to the crisis. There is no military solution for this conflict, as we have said so many times.

Civilians are paying the highest price of the war with their own lives. Putting an end to the suffering caused by this man-made crisis is possible. However, that will happen only when the parties return to the negotiation table — without preconditions and in good faith — and agree to end the armed conflict.

It is time that the parties resume constructive peace talks, without any more delay. The actors have to accept that, to break the deadlock, concessions will have to be made. In that regard, Uruguay reiterates its call to resume dialogue and comply fully with the commitment to cease hostilities, as the first step towards the establishment of peace. Also, countries that have an influence on the parties should collaborate in the search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The long-standing impasse in the peace process and the lack of concrete results are undermining the humanitarian situation in the country, which is exacerbated by hunger and the cholera epidemic, which is deteriorating every day. It is estimated that approximately 500,000 persons have been stricken by the illness. One person dies of cholera every hour in Yemen.

Regrettably, the widespread violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law committed by all combatants have become the common denominator in Yemen. Protecting civilians, especially the most vulnerable, has become critical and fundamental in this context of barbarism and pitiless warfare. Lamentably, women in Yemen continue to suffer deep-rooted discrimination. They do not receive adequate protection against sexual and gender violence.

They are victims of abuses and degrading treatment. This situation is exacerbated by the prolonged war, insecurity and massive internal movements, in which women are particularly vulnerable.

We encourage the Government of Yemen to establish national monitoring and reporting mechanisms to document violations of the human rights of women, including sexual violence, and ensure accountability for those responsible. Moreover, crimes committed against children have exponentially increased in this endless conflict. Children in Yemen spend their childhood in the midst of poverty, hunger, disease and indiscriminate attacks committed against them by all parties to the armed conflict. Many have been killed, mutilated or recruited.

It is critical that all perpetrators of these crimes be added to the list annexed to the annual report of the Secretary-General to be issued soon, in order to clearly denounce before the world all those countries and entities that have committed violations against children, in open contempt not only of international law but of the most elemental rules of humanity.

Those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law should be held accountable for their crimes. Accountability is crucial to resolving the conflict and achieving lasting peace. As we did in the briefing in July (see S/PV.7999), Uruguay reiterates that the Council has the means and authority to establish impartial and transparent investigatory mechanisms for reported violations of international humanitarian law in Yemen, as committed by both parties to the dispute.

I wish to briefly refer to the presidential statement adopted 9 August (S/PRST/2017/14), which highlights the unprecedented level of global humanitarian need and the threat of famine looming over more than 20 million people in some countries, including Yemen. Conflict and violence have devastating humanitarian consequences, hamper effective humanitarian responses and are a primary cause of the famine ravaging the country.

In conclusion, I would like to call on all the parties to the conflict to agree to an immediate cessation of hostilities so as to facilitate unhindered and permanent access to humanitarian aid as well as the resumption of political negotiations.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Beforetturning to my statement, I would like to say that the Government and the people of the Plurinational State of Bolivia express their deep regret and heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Spain for those killed and wounded as a result of the terrorist attack carried out yesterday in Barcelona. We also express our solidarity with the families of the victims, and we hope that the wounded recover soon. Even as we meet, we are receiving reports of attacks in Finland and Burkina Faso, which once again serve to highlight the responsibility of the Security Council to resolve this and other matters linked to international peace and security.

We welcome the briefings of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Stephen O'Brien, to whom we express our full support for the work that they carry out. We also welcome the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen, Mr. Abdulmalik Abduljalil Ali Al-Mikhlafi.

Despite the repeated pronouncements of the Council on the situation in Yemen, it continues to deteriorate. Unfortunately, many elements are coming together in this crisis to cause it to continue to worsen in an alarming manner. A few minutes ago, Mr. O'Brien noted three such elements, namely, famine, cholera and the conflict itself. In addition to those three, we think one of the most serious of those elements is the indifference of the international community. During the meeting held on 12 July (see S/PV.7999), it was noted that the number of persons possibly infected by the cholera outbreak was already alarming. According to the World Health Organization report of 14 August, registered cases of possible infection have exceeded 500,000, of which nearly 2,000 have lost their lives. According to the same organization, since the month of April, when we were cautioned about the outbreak, the death toll has increased fivefold.

Similarly, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), this grim situation is exacerbated by limited access to water, sanitation, basic services and, above all, a lack of medicine and basic supplies for treating those affected. In additional, the diminished medical infrastructure in Yemen leaves 14.8 million people without adequate access to medical assistance. According to OCHA, the troubling food shortage places 60 per cent of the population in food insecurity and 7 million people at risk of famine.

We are distressed that, despite the Council's issuance of presidential statements of 15 June (S/PRST/2017/7) and 9 August (S/PRST/2017/14), wherein it expressed its concerns, the deployment of humanitarian aid in Yemen continues to be obstructed by haphazard unilateral measures imposed by the parties to the conflict and by the high risk and insecurity faced by humanitarian personnel, agencies and organizations on the ground.

By way of example, according to the 17 August statement of the United Nations Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, Mr. Jamie McGoldrick, since January 11 vehicles belonging to humanitarian organizations have been hijacked in the city of Taiz, in addition to the looting of food and other humanitarian goods in that same city on three separate occasions. In addition, the constant threat of air strikes and sporadic armed clashes between the parties and with the coalition limit and obstruct the distribution of humanitarian aid required by Yemeni population.

In that regard, we once again remind the parties to the conflict that they must allow and guarantee the security and independence of agencies providing humanitarian assistance and not identify them as military objectives under any circumstance. Moreover, they should guarantee unconditional and unobstructed access to all places that require humanitarian assistance.

Reports of attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are disturbing, as is the fact that parties to the conflict continue to consider public spaces and private homes as military objectives. On 18 July, six days after the Council received a briefing on the situation in Yemen, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported an aerial bombardment of the population of Taiz, where the target was a makeshift straw house that housed three families of internally displaced refugees — killing 18 civilians, including women and children. Following that incident, in August, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported the death of more than 10 civilians from an aerial bombardment in Saada governorate.

Moreover, the situation concerning migrants continues to be worrisome. According to a report issued by the International Organization for Migration, on 10 and 11 August 280 migrants were forced by their traffickers to abandon in the middle of the sea the boats they were using to try to reach Yemen. Only 69 of them survived. According to a report issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on 11 August, despite the conflict in the country, Yemen continues to be a destination for many refugees fleeing the Horn of Africa in search of means of subsistence, who are victims of criminal groups and human traffickers. Regrettably, the conflict and a lack of effective control mechanisms and security have made possible the proliferation of criminal groups and networks that traffic in persons by taking advantage of their poverty and desperation.

For all of those reasons, we believe that the Security Council should maintain a unanimous and infirm position in condemning efforts and military actions that exacerbate the crisis in Yemen and generate a situation of instability that threatens the lives of millions of innocent people. In that regard, we once again reiterate to the parties involved in the conflict that they have an obligation to respect the provisions of resolution 2140 (2014) and that they must commit to put in place a sustained dialogue process that makes possible a peaceful, inclusive and orderly political transition that meets the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people, all the while respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Yemen.

Lastly, we would like to express our gratitude for the work done by the various United Nations agencies and bodies to provide humanitarian assistance in such a difficult context, to which we reiterate our support.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Mikhlafi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to convey to the members of the Security Council greetings replete with hope and peace.

I would first like to congratulate Ambassador Aboulatta on his wise stewardship of the work of the Security Council as President during this month, as well as to thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to speak to the Council.

I would like to express my condolences to the victims of the horrific attacks in Spain.

I am delighted to be able to participate in this exceptional meeting to discuss the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen. I would like to stress that my participation reflects our deep conviction — that of the Yemeni Government under the leadership of His Excellency President Abdrabuh

Mansour Hadi Mansour — that the only solution to the situation in Yemen is a peaceful one.

The humanitarian and health situation in Yemen is dire and complicated. More than two years have passed since the bloody coup d'état orchestrated by Houthi militias in coalition with the previous President. We need a peaceful solution based on the three terms of reference endorsed by the international community and the Council. We are committed to durable peace. We have never called for war; instead, war was imposed upon us by that rebel gang, which is rebelling against international legitimacy. We participated in peace talks in Geneva and Biel in good faith and with high hopes of achieving peace in Yemen. Yemen was once called the happy Arab country. While the coup masters did not implement the confidence-building measures that we are agreed upon in Biel, we nevertheless participated in the talks in Kuwait, where we spent 115 days trying to achieve peace. We did so because we are a Government committed to peace that is responsible for its people, from Saada to Mahra.

However, the coup masters' participation in all those rounds of talks was only a way for them to push forward their criminal plot to destroy Yemen and to attack neighbouring countries — part of the Iranian plot to destabilize the region and gain time in order to deploy more militias and lead to more death and destruction. This is a large-scale plot that aims to destroy the national State and replace it with a sectarian State and a militia army.

Yemen has become the epitome of the so-called triangle of death of illiteracy, poverty and disease. That is precisely the sort of triangle we have been suffering from during the authoritarian rule of imams. Our people reject this rule. They reject tyranny and dictatorship. Would Europe or the civilized world today accept a divine right to rule? Of course not. Similarly, the Yemeni people reject being ruled by the coup masters, who claim a divine right to rule.

The Yemeni Government has made considerable efforts at reconstruction and has improved security and health services, with the support and assistance of our brethren in the Arab coalition under the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. However, the areas under the control of the coup masters are still suffering from repression, famine and the cholera outbreak. That is not attributed to a lack of food, which is indeed available in the markets. Instead, it is due to the fact that militias have stopped paying the salaries of civil servants for more than 10 months now, to pillaging funds from the Central Bank in Sana'a and to trading in food and humanitaran aid — all of which enables the coup authors — while millions of Yemenis are dying of hunger and curable diseases.

The Yemeni Government has always been open to the suggestions of the Special Envoy, as we believe in peace and did not choose war. However, the coup masters reject all those suggestions, thereby rendering the conflict intractable. We accepted all the suggestions in Kuwait and unilaterally signed them. But the coup masters did not accept any suggestions. Again, the conflict is intractable. And the reason is very simple: the war has become lucrative for the militias. While the Yemeni people are suffering from famine, Houthi warlords are making millions. Why would they then accept peace and lose all that money, which is tainted with Yemeni blood?

At this juncture I would like to commend the presidential statement of 9 August (S/PRST/2017/14) on the risk of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and the north-east of Nigeria. The statement condemned certain parties that are failing to ensure the uninterrupted and unhindered delivery of food and humanitarian aid. For more than two and a half years, the Houthi and Saleh militias have besieged the city of Taiz and prevented the delivery of humanitarian assistance and medical supplies. They have also been shelling the city day and night.

We appreciate international appeals for the opening of the Sana'a airport. Despite our concerns and the security threat associated with the operation of the airport by the rebel militias, we are willing to agree to the opening of the airport — so long as the militias leave the airport's management to official staff affiliated with the State before the coup, under the supervision of the United Nations.

We are determined to mitigate the suffering of the people in our beloved capital of Sana'a. However, we are surprised that we hear no appeals or tugging at the human conscience in the context of the siege on the city of Taiz. The people of Taiz feel that the international community is applying double standards. Taiz is being shelled and destroyed day by day. That beautiful and peaceful city, which was once even referred to as the cultural capital and a "city of dreams", has been reduced to rubble. Its buildings, schools, hospitals,

mosques and historical landmarks have been obliterated by unrelenting, indiscriminate shelling. The shelling has not only destroyed infrastructure, but it has also led to civilian casualties, especially among women and children, who are killed daily and affected by famine and disease. The siege has exacerbated the situation. Currently exiting and returning to the city takes seven hours, whereas it previously only took 10 minutes. Since the beginning of the war, 4,164 people have died and 17,911 have been wounded in the city, most of whom were civilians, including women and children. The life for residents of the city of Taiz has become hell. It used to be a city known for its culture, education and love of the arts.

This tragedy, which is akin to some of the most horrific that the world has seen, has not received sufficient attention from humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies. Taiz is appealing to Council members' conscience, before the law, to stand by it and lift the siege. Lifting the siege should be a priority for everyone who believes in the right to life and the right to restore peace in Yemen, including those who want to end the suffering of Yemenis. Lifting the siege in Taiz was among the top the priorities during the previous rounds of peace consultations. We have reached a number of agreements concerning the siege, under the supervision of the United Nations, the Special Envoy and the international community; but none of them has been implemented. The people of Taiz are waiting for delegations to visit the blighted city so that they can fathom the gravity of the suffering. I express my gratitude and appreciation to all those who have fulfilled, or tried to, their humanitarian obligations despite the siege.

We are committed to a peaceful and political settlement to the crisis in Yemen that will maintain the security, the independence and the territorial integrity of Yemen based on the three locally, regionally and internationally agreed-on terms of reference — the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its Implementation Mechanism, the National Dialogue Conference outcomes and the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015). We reiterate that the Yemeni Government is willing to make concessions, however difficult, to restore just and sustainable peace, which the great Yemeni people deserve. We have therefore accepted all the proposals put forward by the Special Envoy, to which he referred today in his briefing. We reiterate that we support those proposals and that we are open to any other proposals or ideas.

But, in turn, the Security Council and the international community must send a clear, strong and decisive message to the party that rejects those proposals. It should bring pressure to bear on the coup masters so that they accept the proposals that were endorsed by the Council in its latest presidential statement and participate in negotiations in good faith and with an open mind, just as we are committed to participate in negotiations in good faith and with an open mind. In that regard, I would like to quote the preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO:

> "That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

I would like to clarify a number of points.

First, the Yemeni Government reiterates that it will continue to support the efforts of Special Envoy Ould Cheikh Ahmed. We support his suggestions and proposals to the President of Yemen, which include provisions for the withdrawal of militias from the port and the governorate of Hudaydah based on last year's peace consultations in Kuwait, as well as the establishment of a technical committee of economic and financial experts to help the Government establish an appropriate and urgently needed mechanism to pay civil servants' salaries and deal with revenues generated within the regions controlled by the coup masters, in order to provide the income needed to cover such expenses. Unfortunately, however, the Houthi-Saleh coalition has rejected those proposals.

Second, those gangs would have never been able to continue rejecting those proposals if they had not been receiving financial, logistical and military support from Iran. Thanks to that support and smuggled Iranian weapons, the militias are now turning into a serious threat to Yemenis and neighbouring countries, in particular the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. That country is being targeted by ballistic missiles, which poses a serious threat to navigation and international shipping routes in the Red Sea, including attacks on ships and mining in the reigon.

Third, we will continue our cooperation with the international community to combat that scourge, to which Yemen has one of the first victims. Our latest success in combating Al-Qaida and liberating the city

of Al Mukalla from that group in April 2016, with the support of Arab coalition forces, was a demonstration of our commitment to combat all terrorist and radical groups, not only militarily but also culturally and intellectually. That includes putting an end to the coup that is fuelling terrorism and usurping the role of the Government in order to plunge the country into chaos, violence, murder and destruction. They are preparing fertile ground for terrorism to flourish.

Fourth, the number of our prisoners and detainees in Houthi prisons is increasing daily. The international community has not raised its voice with regard to the violation of their human rights. Their suffering is augmented by the fact that their families and children have no knowledge of the fate of their missing loved ones — fathers, brothers and bread winners. The conscience of the international community continues to manifest itself in deafening silence.

Fifth, any attempt by a minority or sect to exclude others and alone control power and wealth in Yemen, which is exactly what the militias and coup masters are trying to achieve, will eventuallly fail. Peace will prevail through the renunciation of violence and the exclusion of others, through sharing power and wealth, and through coexistence, civil liberties and political engagement.

Sixth, leveraging human suffering is a crime. Finding serioius, genuine and comprehensive solutions and being open to all proposals and ideas are the courageous steps our people expect.

Seventh, the coup masters can achieve peace with all segments of Yemeni society if they adhere to the terms of reference for peace and what they require. They should not be rewarded for their crimes.

The militias have turned a blind eye to all the options for peace and all the concessions and sacrifices that President Mansour has made in an effort to avoid this foolish war, in which the first and last to lose are the great Yemeni people. We will remain committed to a peaceful solution based on a just and comprehensive peace according to the terms of reference. We will not tolerate blackmail or rewarding the militias for violating State sovereignty.

The Yemeni Government, under President Mansour, is making great efforts to address the dire humanitarian situation, especially with regard to the cholera epidemic and the situation in the areas under the control of the coup masters. Our responsibility extends to the whole country. We are coordinating our work with the relevant international and humanitarian organizations so as to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian and medical assistance. According to a statement by the Ministry of Health of Yemen issued on 15 August, the number of suspected cases of cholera stands at 508,680. Another 1,970 of people have died from the disease. On the other hand, those who were successfully treated account for 99 per cent of the suspected cases. That reflects the success of our common efforts and the effectiveness of treatment despite the difficult circumstances on the ground.

However, the situation remains dire and we need more assistance and support. We are deeply grateful to the donor countries and organizations that funded the 2017 Yemen humanitarian response plan, but we appeal to the international community to prioritize this issue and provide assistance. To date, we have received only 44 per cent of the funding for the humanitarian response plan, although we are already in the second half of the year. We therefore call on all States, especially those that pledged funds to Yemen at the Geneva conference, to fulfil their commitments.

I cannot fail to express the thanks and appreciation of the Government of Yemen to Secretary-General António Guterres, donor countries, the King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian AID, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme, and aid organizations in neighbouring countries, including the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, for their continuous suport and assistance to address the humanitarian situation and the cholera outbreak in Yemen. We have enjoyed the generous support of the King Salman Center, in the form of 550 tons of medicines and fluids, and signed agreements with WHO and UNICEF to cover the costs of several projects to prevent the spread of cholera — worth $66.7 million, in addition to $8.2 million to fund WHO's activities related to treating cholera cases. This assistance has contributed to the success of our efforts. We in the Yemeni Government are fully committed — morally, humanly and by our Constitution — to fulfilling our obligations towards our country, our nation and our people. We are working to provide health services to all Yemenis without exception or discrimination, and we are working to overcome all difficulties that stand in our way.

In conclusion, I am confident that settling the situation in Yemen genuinely and sustainably lies in addressing the root causes of the crisis by ending the causes for war and coup against the State and by achieving national political consensus. We need to restore legitimacy and State institutions and normalize life through a peace process that saves the country from being hijacked by Tehran's militias and its affiliates in the region. We need to pressure the Houthi-Saleh to return to peace talks and engage sincerely and with genuine willingness to make concessions for the sake of Yemen. The unity of the Council will increase the chances of reaching a peaceful solution in Yemen. We need to revert to the terms of reference and the resolutions of the Security Council and respect for international law. We appreciate the efforts of the Council, the Ambassadors of the group of 18 and the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy to achieve security and stability in Yemen. We reiterate our deepest gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and all the countries of the Arab coalition for restoring legitimacy in Yemen. We are committed to peace. We ask the Council to remain at our side in order to save Yemen and its people.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on this subject.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8028

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8028th meeting
Tuesday, 22 August 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-26448 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jenča.

Mr. Jenča: I thank the Security Council for this opportunity to brief it on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

As detailed last month by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov (see S/PV.8011), the recent crisis in Jerusalem once again highlighted the unsustainable nature of the current situation and the need for a political horizon and a clear recommitment by the international community and both parties to ending the occupation and to realizing a two-State solution that meets the legitimate national aspirations and security needs of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Following the deadly 14 July attack in which two policemen were killed by three assailants in the Old City, three Israelis were stabbed to death in a terror attack and six Palestinians were killed during primarily peaceful protests, as a result of live ammunition, which raises concerns about the use of force by Israeli security forces. I join the Secretary-General in commending the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in line with the latter's special and historic role, for bringing that crisis to a conclusion. I also note positively the calls for de-escalation by prominent religious leaders on both sides. We encourage continued discussion among all parties concerned to ensure the safety and security of all worshippers and visitors while upholding the historic status quo in the holy sites. In that context, continued security coordination between Israel and the Palestinian Authority is paramount, and the official resumption of contact between the parties is vital.

In other incidents in recent weeks, two Palestinians were killed and more than 150 injured were by Israeli security forces. Four Israelis were injured by Palestinians, including one civilian. On 28 July, a Palestinian man was shot dead by Israeli security forces for reportedly attempting to stab a soldier at the Gush Etzion Junction of the West Bank. On 2 August, an Israeli civilian was seriously wounded during a stabbing attack by a Palestinian in the Israeli town of Yavneh. On 8 August, militants in Gaza fired a rocket that landed in an open area in southern Israel. The following day, the Israeli Air Force retaliated with missile fire at two Hamas installations in Gaza, injuring three people. On 17 August, an alleged suicide bombing killed one and injured five others in the southern Gaza strip.

Over the past month, developments occurred that further undermined trust between the parties. On 26 July, the Israeli Knesset approved the first reading of an amendment to the Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel. If approved, that law would further cement Israeli control of occupied East Jerusalem and would limit the ability of both sides to reach a negotiated solution that is in line with General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and prior agreements. Jerusalem is the final status issue that must be resolved through negotiations between the parties. Any move that could have an impact on demographics in the city is extremely worrisome and could spark violence.

On 25 July, 15 Israeli settler families illegally occupied the so-called Machpela House, in the divided city of Hebron, despite an ongoing Israeli legal process regarding ownership of the House. We urge Israeli authorities to resolve the situation quickly to avoid further tensions in that already highly charged town. Settlers reportedly also placed mobile homes near the settlement of Halamish in response to last month's deadly attack there, as well as within the Shvut Rachel neighbourhood of the Shilo settlement. On 3 August, the Israeli Prime Minister delivered an inaugural speech at the launch of the construction of 1,000 new housing units in the Beitar Ilit settlement. In the speech, he praised the achievement of his Government in promoting settlements. Such actions only fuel perceptions that those working to obstruct the two-State solution are gaining the upper hand. I must reiterate that settlements are illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace.

In a few days' time, we will mark the third anniversary of the ceasefire that ended the most recent

round of hostilities between Hamas and Israel in the Gaza Strip in 2014, in which close to 1,500 civilians were killed. Since then, the overall humanitarian conditions in Gaza have worsened. That was clearly documented in a recent United Nations country team report that looked at the state of Gaza's population since Hamas' takeover of the Strip in 2007, thereby increasing concerns that the Strip could become unlivable by 2020. The punishing measures taken against Gaza by the Palestinian Authority since April only add to the crippling humanitarian effect of Israel's closures on the population. Whatever the political differences between the Palestinian factions, it is not the people of Gaza who should pay the price.

Despite reconstruction efforts over the past three years, approximately 29,000 people remain displaced, while living in temporary shelters and in poor conditions. Completing our collective reconstruction effort in Gaza is within sight, but Member States need to fulfil their funding commitments. The Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, established by Israel and the Palestinian Authority with support from the United Nations in the aftermath of the conflict, has enabled much of the reconstruction. I encourage Israel and the Palestinian Authority to intensify their engagement towards improving the Mechanism to reach its full potential. It is also time for the parties to discuss the future of that provisional instrument with the goal of fully lifting all closures.

Despite the import of fuel from Egypt to run the Gaza power plant, most residents are experiencing the sweltering summer heat with only four to five hours of electricity per day. The impact of the ongoing energy crisis is far-reaching, while affecting the availability of clean water, health care and sanitation services. The United Nations continues to provide a lifeline through its provision of emergency fuel in support of a number of critical facilities. I call on Palestinian leaders to address the destructive consequences of the divisions. I encourage them to reach an agreement that would allow the legitimate Palestinian authorities to take up their responsibilities in Gaza, as a step towards the formation of a united and democratically elected Palestinian Government based on the principles of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Hamas must also ensure that calm is maintained by stopping the militant build-up against Israel and by doing its utmost to sustain security at the border with Egypt. Israel should step-up measures to lift the closures and facilitate development in Gaza as overall calm persists in the Strip in line with resolution 1860 (2009). I also call on donors to respond urgently to the $25 million humanitarian appeal made in July in the wake of the electricity crisis so as to fill the current 70 per cent funding gap.

Briefly with regard to Lebanon, the situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has generally remained quiet. On 31 July, Major General Beary chaired a tripartite meeting with the parties, during which both sides discussed violations of resolution 1701 (2006), Blue Line marking and ongoing liaison and coordination matters. UNIFIL protested the presence of unauthorized weapons and uniformed personnel in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) during a commemoration of the 2006 war, organized by Hizbullah on 13 August. Military operations against militants continue on the eastern border with Syria. As a result of local deals, a number of militants and refugees were evacuated from the area of Arsal to areas in Syria. Support for the Lebanese Armed Forces and other security institutions of the State as the sole protectors of the security and stability of Lebanon remains important.

In the Syrian Golan, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic has been maintained, albeit in a volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in Syria. Both Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic have stated their continued commitment to the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces and support for the full return of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force to the area of separation, conditions permitting.

With regard once again to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, last month's crisis in the Old City of Jerusalem, which is home to sites holy to all three monotheistic religions, demonstrated that tensions can ignite, thereby threatening to transform the nature of the conflict and spread across borders. It is therefore essential that international and regional partners remain engaged in ending the occupation and resolving all final-status issues, in upholding and implementing the vision of two States living side-by-side in peace and security based of all the relevant United Nations resolutions and in supporting both Israeli and Palestinian leaders to take the necessary steps towards ensuring an enduring peace.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Jenča for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča for his briefing.

The position of Uruguay with regard to the conflict between Israel and Palestine and, even more important, on how to reach an agreement that will end it, is well known, and I will therefore be very brief. Nevertheless, we must not forego such opportunities to encourage both parties in the search for peace. I will limit my comments today to several recent developments that have an impact on the peace process, and possible courses of action for the future.

Uruguay is concerned about the lack of progress in connection with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with its humanitarian, political and security implications in both countries and throughout the region. Unfortunately, over the past several months there have been no major developments with regard to the peace process. We were hoping to see a quickened pace of action and more substantial outcomes following the release of the Quartet report (S/2016/595, annex) and the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), but that has not been the case.

The parties have not thus far taken any measure to reverse the trends that threaten the two-State solution, despite the valuable recommendations contained in the Quartet's report, published more than a year ago. We look forward to the presentation, next September, of the third quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) by Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov. Although we do not expect major changes with respect to his briefing made during the open debate last June (see S/PV.7977), we reiterate our interest that it be circulated in writing prior to next month's meeting so that we will be able to analyse the information provided to us and to provide our impressions following a very careful reading of the document.

A month ago (see S/PV.8011), we expressed our condemnation and concern with regard to the escalation in violence following the terrorist attack on the esplanade of the mosques in Jerusalem. Fortunately, some hours afterwards, the Government of Israel left unimplemented the new security measures that the Palestinian side viewed as having an impact on the status quo of the holy sites. As a result, it was possible to reduce exponentially the violence that had been afflicting the Palestinian territories for more than 10 days. In that regard, we ask the Israeli and the Palestinian authorities to make every effort to avoid unnecessary provocations that increase tension and violence and that compromise the efforts made by the international community to try to restart the bilateral peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine with a view to achieving the two-State solution.

With regard to Gaza, the situation that has been eclipsed in the Security Council by the many other humanitarian disasters facing the region, we remain concerned about the serious crisis being suffered by the population due to a cumulative process over many years marked by the consequences of armed conflicts and the negligence of regional authorities. The 2 million Palestinians who reside in Gaza and are subsisting in very hard conditions — for example, the electricity crisis in the area — also face the possibility of a new conflict that may result in a humanitarian disaster and that may foster extremism in the whole region. We therefore urgently call on the Palestinian and the Israeli authorities, as well as the leaders of Hamas, to find a solution to the various problems that threaten to plunge Gaza into a downward spiral.

In conclusion, as we have done since 1947, we reiterate the unwavering commitment of Uruguay to peace in the Middle East and are concerned by the long-standing paralysis of the process. In order to achieve that long-awaited objective, the accomplishment of the two-State solution, the parties must resume direct bilateral negotiations. That is the only option that would allow for the peaceful coexistence of Israel and Palestine and the welfare and safety of their peoples. The international community continues to clamour for a politically negotiated settlement, which is the only way out of this endless and dark tunnel. All mediation and facilitation efforts on the part of Council members are welcome. We ask once again that the voice of the international community be heard and that we be allowed to help. It should not be forgotten that in the coexistence between States there is no asset more valuable than peace. The potential for future cooperation and development remains intact. Be an example. Be pioneers and courageously negotiate peace, bringing stability to the afflicted region of the Middle East.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Bolivia wishes to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Miroslav Jenča, for his briefing this morning. Bolivia is attending this meeting to make

known its concern regarding the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territories.

We are concerned about the information circulated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs that on the morning of 21 August Israel demolished a nursery in the Bedouin community of Jabal al-Baba, in the occupied territory of the West Bank. We wish to make known our deep rejection of this type of unilateral action taken by the Government of Israel, as such are violations of international law, human rights and international humanitarian law. As expressed by the Council in resolution 242 (1967), of 22 November 1967, the fulfilment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, which should include, among other things, the termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

For Bolivia, the solution by which two States would live side by side, with secure borders recognized by both, is the only alternative that, based on dialogue, will allow Palestine to achieve its full development in all spheres — political, social, economic and cultural. In that regard, we join in and commend all efforts aimed at reaching a peaceful settlement of the conflict between Palestine and Israel, such as the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet road map and others, and at ensuring a just and lasting peace for both peoples. We reaffirm our full commitment to multilateralism and debate framed in respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

However, it is essential that efforts to resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestine continue to be a matter of priority to be addressed by the Security Council, with the understanding that it is our responsibility to be the guarantor of international peace and security and to take timely action to safeguard the integrity of both peoples. We should not allow ourselves to be immersed in delaying tactics that are used by the occupying Power to continue with its colonizing activities. It is unacceptable that, under the pretext of security and public order, the Government of Israel should blatantly continue its policies and practices aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem. We must remember that such measures were condemned by the Security Council in several resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016). We cannot allow, by our inaction, situations such as those that occurred last July in the clashes in East Jerusalem and the West Bank to be repeated. As Council members, we cannot allow more violence that adds to the number of dead, be they Israeli or Palestinian, to take place.

Bolivia reaffirms that the lack of accountability for violations of international law committed by Israel serves to reinforce a culture of impunity, leading to a recurrence of violations and seriously endangering the maintenance of international peace, as established in Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1.

Once again, we express our commitment to the immediate and timely implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), and we again call for the next report to be circulated in advance and in writing to the members of the Council for their thorough consideration. In that context, all settlement activities being carried out by the Government of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories must cease, as well as any expansionist activities that undermine any possibility of dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis.

We vehemently reaffirm that the only long-term solution to the conflict is the two-State solution, with an Israeli State and a free, sovereign and independent Palestinian State, within the pre-1967 international borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on my list.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8029

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8029th meeting
Thursday, 24 August 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-26689 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to the statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2017/15.

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8030

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8030th meeting

Thursday, 24 August 2017, 10.10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-26696 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Mr. Nicholas Haysom,Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan; and His Excellency Mr. Festus Mogae, Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Haysom is participating in today's meeting via video-teleconference from Addis Ababa. Mr. Mogae is participating via video-teleconference from Juba.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Wane.

Mr. Wane: I am grateful forthis opportunity to brief the Security Council on the Secretary-General's 30-day report and on the overall situation in South Sudan.

The deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) is under way and, since the submission of the report a week ago, there have been no significant updates on the deployment process. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) continues to engage the Government on a regular basis in order to expedite the deployment. Enhanced cooperation with the Government will be critical for the RPF to complete the process and fully implement its mandate.

As has been reported, some misunderstandings arose with the Government surrounding the accommodation of the advance party of the Rwandan contingent of the RPF to Juba. I am pleased to confirm that, following the active engagement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. David Shearer, and his team with Government officials over the past two weeks, those misunderstandings have been cleared.

In commemoration of the second anniversary of the signing, on 25 August 2015, of the South Sudan Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, former President Mr. Festus Mogae, declared yesterday that little meaningful progress had been achieved in its implementation. President Mogae will shortly explain the challenges he faces and his efforts to revitalize the process, which Special Envoy Haysom actively supports. Let me say that the Secretariat could not agree more with his assessment and the calls on the Security Council to express itself strongly, unanimously and unreservedly in support of his efforts and those of the region as a whole, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-led Revitalization Forum. More than ever before, there is a need for continued and close coordination among IGAD, the African Union, the United Nations and the broader international community to ensure that we leverage our collective influence to bring an end to the suffering of the civilian population and help put South Sudan on a more positive trajectory.

The security situation in the country is a cause for serious concern, as it has been over the past few years. Unfortunately, the expected ceasefire remains elusive, as military operations continued during the reporting period, mostly in the Upper Nile part of the country. While efforts by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to take Pagak, the de facto headquarters of the Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO), initially succeeded, fighting around Pagak and along the corridor to Majang continues, while civilians in the area remain displaced, including refugees heading to Ethiopia. Further north, clashes resumed between the SPLA and the SPLA-IO in Kaka, on the west bank of the Nile. Insecurity also continued in the Equatorias, including long main roads. UNMISS has enhanced its presence in Torit and continues intensive patrolling to and around Yei in response to persistent threats to civilians.

Those incidents directly affect humanitarian operations, which consequently have an impact on the most vulnerable of the population in dire need of assistance. In the month of July, 136 access incidents were reported by the humanitarian community. That is the highest number recorded in any one month since December 2013. Of those 136 incidents, 49 involved violence against personnel and assets, once again

illustrating the increasingly dangerous and risky environment in which humanitarian actors operate. In a persistent trend, letters threatening violence against aid workers from different ethnicities have also continued. Incidents of looting also spiked during the month of July, with 15 incidents reported across the country. Of particular concern were the six major looting incidents of warehouses and trucks in transit, leading to the loss of 670 metric tons of food meant for vulnerable communities in Eastern Equatoria, Lakes, Upper Nile and Wau. Humanitarian actors were also denied access, both by Government and non-State armed actors, to several critical areas.

The Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Lacroix, visited South Sudan from 1 to 3 August. During his visit, he met with President Salva Kiir and key Government officials. He reiterated to all his interlocutors that there was no military solution to the conflict in South Sudan and that inclusive and credible political processes were the only way forward. Although President Kiir and his Cabinet members expressed reservation about the inclusion of some people in the dialogue process, in particular Riek Machar, there was an acknowledgment that sizable communities cannot be left out of the process just because they were led by, or supported, a particular individual.

Political attention in Juba appeared squarely focused on the national dialogue process and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement reunification, on which Special Envoy Haysom will report. While the national dialogue has made some progress, achieving key enablers for a credible process, such as inclusivity and a free and secure environment, remain a challenge. Following the national dialogue secretariat's request for technical assistance, UNMISS has been coordinating with other United Nations entities and institutional partners to assist with needs and the support required. In that regard, support was provided to a steering committee inception seminar, during which participants acknowledged a better understanding of the challenges associated with ensuring inclusivity, confidence-building and the actual implementation of the process in the prevailing environment. However, the national dialogue continued to be criticized for its lack of inclusivity.

The national dialogue steering committee's outreach to key opposition figures outside the country, including Mr. Machar, Thomas Cirilo and Lam Akol, yielded little, as those actors either refused to receive visiting national dialogue delegations or objected to the viability of a national dialogue as a vehicle for achieving an inclusive political settlement. We have been informed that their opposition is not directed against the need for such a nation-building exercise, but against the conduct of the dialogue in advance of, or as an alternative to, an inclusive peace process. On the other hand, the participation of some civil society and faith-based groups, both in the steering committee proceedings and in the seminar I mentioned, is a positive development.

Meanwhile, some progress can be reported in the negotiations related to the establishment of the hybrid court for South Sudan. Two weeks ago, the Government of South Sudan and the African Union Commission agreed, at the technical level, on the text of the legal instruments for the establishment of the court. They will now submit the legal instruments to the Ministers of Justice and to the senior management of the African Union Commission for their consideration and approval. The United Nations Office of Legal Affairs continues to support that process.

The national dialogue could make a significant contribution to improving the political environment through an open discussion of critical national issues. Participants and observers attest to open debate even within the steering committee. However, it cannot be a substitute for a negotiated peace agreement, which, if implemented in good faith, can silence the guns, end the conflict and enhance the potential for the national dialogue to play a part in consolidating long-term sustainable peace and ensuring true ownership by all South Sudanese stakeholders.

As has been repeated many times here in the Chamber, the conflict in South Sudan is a man-made one for which the leaders of the country bear a direct responsibility. The dire economic situation and continued conflict there have combined to generate a dangerous and precarious situation for its citizens, but the same leaders can also bring the country back from the brink of the abyss. All that is needed is genuine political will to halt military operations, peaceably negotiate and make the compromises necessary to achieve sustainable peace in the country. I would also urge the Security Council to pronounce itself in that regard. It is critical that the leaders and all other stakeholders in South Sudan hear the international

community's unified demand of what is expected of them in the interests of their own people.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Wane for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Haysom.

Mr. Haysom: I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in South Sudan. My remarks will build upon the briefing provided by Assistant Secretary-General Wane and will cover the developments relating to a resumption of the political process in South Sudan.

Since my previous briefing (see S/PV.7982), two months ago, the five internal and regional initiatives to address the crisis in one form or another indicate continuing concern about the trajectory and depth of the conflict, without any of them thus far presenting a definite breakthrough in the political impasse. However, I remain hopeful that some, or a combination of them, may have the potential to positively impact the situation.

As we just heard from Assistant Secretary-General Wane, there is sporadic fighting and widespread insecurity across the country. Our engagements with South Sudanese interlocutors, including the opposition, suggest that battlefield fortunes continue to inform the calculus of both the Government and its opponents. Alongside its military pacification efforts, the Government has created an appearance of reconciliation efforts, including through the limited release of political prisoners. The Government has further linked those efforts to the national dialogue initiative and to laying the groundwork for calls on political actors to prepare for elections in 2018. For our part, we have made clear to all external and internal stakeholders our view that the prevailing insecurity, internal and external population displacement and lack of appropriate institutions, or a reasonably level political playing field, in an increasingly divided ethnic environment, militate against organizing credible elections within the year. Indeed, it may well contribute to deepening and extending the conflict.

Assistant Secretary-General Wane dealt with some of the challenges facing the national dialogue and its potential contribution to long-term sustainable peace. I would simply draw attention, in the context of current regional initiatives, to the possibility of the national dialogue initiative being played off against other initiatives directly related to securing an immediate cessation of hostilities.

Among the regional efforts, the Ugandan initiative has focused on the reunification of certain factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). In late July, that initiative led to President Kiir, Ms. Rebecca Garang, of the former detainees group, and First Vice-President Taban Deng committing to expediting the implementation of the Agreement on the Reunification of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, known as the Arusha Agreement, of January 2015. The Agreement concerned a resolution of SPLM intra-party problems. With the continued absence of the SPLM in Opposition, led by Riek Machar, and some among the former detainees group reluctant to reconcile with President Kiir in such a manner, the Ugandan initiative continues to falls short of achieving its goal. It may even be divisive both among and between opposition groups. President Museveni has also begun to engage groups outside the SPLM core, by, inter alia, encouraging preparations for elections.

Another regional initiative — the meeting of opposition parties, which was to be hosted in Kenya by President Kenyatta — has not gained much traction. With the Kenyan Government focused on the outcome of recent elections and the former detainees, who were a driving force behind the initiative, preoccupied with their Kampala discussions, the initiative appears to be stalled. The apparent advantage to any peace process of dealing with a coherent opposition and the increaising competition and conflicts between opposition groupings have led stakeholders to explore alternatives. A meeting between opposition parties, possibly outside Kenya, could be reinstated as part of preparations for the Revitalization Forum of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The decision of the IGAD Summit of Heads of State and Government of 12 June to convene a high-level Revitalization Forum in respect to the 2015 IGAD-sponsored peace Agreement has begun to gain some momentum. It aims to include Government and opposition groups in a dialogue to consider how to implement the peace Agreement, and IGAD has appointed Ambassador Ismail Wais as its Special Envoy to follow through on its decisions. Recognizing the importance of securing President Kiir's buy-in, IGAD's Council of Foreign Ministers met on 24 and 25 July in Juba. Following that, IGAD, with help from the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), the

United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and my Office, carried out a mapping exercise on the relevant opposition actors to be included in the Revitalization Forum.

In mid-August, I attended an IGAD-hosted meeting in Ethiopia of independent South Sudanese experts. The discussions were frank and generated a number of recommendations for IGAD, including on which opposition parties to engage and on how the peace Agreement could be adjusted to reflect the new realities in South Sudan. While the IGAD initiative continues to have potential, a main concern, which I have conveyed to IGAD, is its cautious preparation for engagement with opposition actors. Although those engagements are delicate, the danger is that the more the initiative consults with IGAD capitals, including Juba, the more suspicious the opposition will become that its agenda is partisan.

Crucially and irrespective of his declared commitment made to the IGAD Council of Ministers during their Juba visit to implement the IGAD summit decisions, President Kiir continues to prioritize the national dialogue and the reunification of the SPLM, which he recently stressed would bring about peace, with the revitalization process playing only a supplementary role. As IGAD grapples with those challenges, it has already warned that the indicative timeline for holding the Revitalization Forum at the end of September will necessarily slip.

Meanwhile, with regard to the African Union's (AU) engagement, the AU Chairperson, President Alpha Oumar Konaré, is awaiting the internal adoption of a broad AU engagement strategy on South Sudan before taking further measures. Previously, President Konaré emphasized speaking with one voice, the primacy of internal support for any solutions to the conflict and a full and robust presence of the Regional Protection Force. President Konaré will visit Addis Ababa this week, thereby providing my Office an opportunity to engage and take stock of the current tracks of engagement and the respective steps to be taken by the AU, IGAD and the United Nations. We will be concerned about establishing mutual complementarity between IGAD and AU initiatives. That will be crucial as we enter a period of more intensive public engagement by the Security Council, the AU Peace and Security Council and forums on the margins of the General Assembly, respectively.

Given the motives and underlying logic that drive the national dialogue, the SPLM reunification process, IGAD's peace Agreement Revitalization Forum and even the AU plan of action, it would, at first instance, appear to suggest that those initiatives might clash or undermine one another. On the other hand, they could harness potential complementarity, and such an outcome would require a clear commitment to an inclusive and credible peace process.

We have underlined to the IGAD secretariat the importance of distinguishing the particular goals of each initiative and encouraged it to focus on how they can work to the greater good. The Revitalization Forum, the national dialogue and the other initiatives should neither adopt the agenda of the others, nor overload the agendas of competing initiatives with their own goals. Therefore, in the quest for a more coherent approach, my Office will continue to work closely with IGAD, the JMEC, the AU and UNMISS to support initiatives towards sustainable peace. I will also continue to engage South Sudanese stakeholders to open lines to all sides of the conflict.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Haysom for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mogae.

Mr. Mogae: I would like to thank the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta, for his kind invitation to me to brief the Security Council today.

This morning, in Juba, I chaired the monthly plenary meeting of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC). I therefore come to the Council via videolink from the base of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Before I begin, I would like to deal with a housekeeping matter by noting that as I shall be issuing the pending JMEC quarterly report by the end of this month, as mandated under Chapter VII of the peace Agreement. I trust that it will reach all Council members in good time.

Members will recall that in my briefing to the Security Council last month, I described the "one voice" initiative and the process by which the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mandated the convening of a high-level Revitalization forum for the peace Agreement in South Sudan (see S/PV.8008). I was very grateful for the unanimous support of the members of the Security Council for the

IGAD initiative. The Council's support and endorsement sends a strong message to all South Sudanese leaders that the world is watching and has high expectations for a rapid and sustained improvement in the overall situation in South Sudan.

The second anniversary of the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan passed relatively unnoticed last week. Our perception at the time of the signing of the peace Agreement, in August 2015, was that it had ended a tragic internal conflict that had threatened to cast Africa's youngest nation apart, and it was hoped that disagreements among the parties over substantive issues had been resolved.

The peace Agreement brought JMEC into being, and we believed that our task would be simply to oversee and guide its implementation by the Transitional Government of National Unity. By now, the peace Agreement should have achieved considerable progress towards improved security and governance in the country. From day one, however, we have had to persuade the parties to implement each and every task. Disagreements between the key principals and the lack of any appetite for compromise slowed progress to a standstill and led to growing tensions in Juba that ultimately resulted in the violence of July 2016 and its continuing repercussions. Two years on since the signing of the peace Agreement there has been little meaningful progress in its implementation.

Since July 2016, we, as JMEC, have remained profoundly shocked by the rampant hostilities across the country and the rapid deterioration of the political, security, humanitarian and economic situation in South Sudan. As a result, we are now rightly absorbed in a process to restore and revitalize the prominence of the peace Agreement.

In the past month, the security situation in the former Upper Nile state has worsened, due to the recent offensive operations by forces of the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Government against the Machar faction of the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition in Manyiang and Pagak. In today's JMEC plenary, I condemned all the violence that occurred in and around Pagak over the past month and urged that military operations cease immediately. I also urged all parties involved to facilitate access for the Cease Fire and Transitional Security Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) to investigate and report on the situation in Pagak.

In this month in which we marked World Humanitarian Day, tens of thousands of people in Upper Nile have been forced to flee their homes, and humanitarian aid workers have had no choice but to relocate from the area and suspend delivery of support to those in need. The cycle of violence, displacement and deprivation of humanitarian support has been repeated around the country over the past year and has led to untold misery among those who seek only to live peacefully and provide for their families.

Over the past week, there has been some unfortunate confusion and dispute over the deployment of advanced elements of the Regional Protection Force. One impact of this dispute was the temporary grounding of all United Nations flights, which had a direct impact on the operations of CTSAMM. This is deeply regrettable, and I urge the Transitional Government of National Unity to resolve issues with UNMISS swiftly and facilitate the deployment of the Force without further hindrance, in accordance with resolution 2304 (2016).

To that end, I have further urged IGAD to convene a meeting between the Transitional Government of National Unity, UNMISS and the Chiefs of Defence Forces of the troop-contributing countries, as specified in the IGAD communiqué of 12 June 2017. That meeting has not yet taken place and, as a result, key issues affecting the practical deployment of the Force have not been addressed, and serious challenges are arising.

The IGAD Council of Ministers met on 24 July for the first time in Juba. In its communiqué that day, the Council of Ministers empowered the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan to coordinate the revitalization process, including all stakeholders and the institutions charged with the responsibility for the implementation of the peace Agreement. The Council also urged all South Sudanese stakeholders to embrace the objectives of the High-level Revitalization Forum and collaborate with the IGAD Special Envoy to achieve a positive outcome. It is essential to stress a number of issues regarding the Revitalization Forum in order to ensure full understanding. The Revitalization Forum is an IGAD initiative, mandated by the Summit of Heads of State and Government and executed by the Council of Ministers through the office of the new IGAD Special Envoy. Our role as the JMEC is to support IGAD in its efforts to convene the Forum.

While the Forum was set up to fulfil three objectives — first, to reinstate the permanent ceasefire; secondly, to reinstate the full and inclusive implementation of the peace Agreement; and, thirdly, to develop revised and realistic timelines for implementation with a view to elections and the end of the transition period — the outcomes of the Forum are not predetermined. It is for the parties and estranged groups to determine and commit to the outcomes of the Forum. After all, in the end the responsibility for the implementation of the peace Agreement lies squarely with those parties. This is a Forum through which we can explore options that can restore the prominence of the peace process, while taking current realities into account. It is our hope that this revitalization process will be pursued in the spirit of peace, inclusiveness and compromise.

In the JMEC's perspective, for the revitalization process to succeed, there is a need for demonstrable political will by the parties and estranged groups to be inclusive and to accommodate one another politically, rather than defeat each other militarily.

We must speak with one voice to the leaders of South Sudan and align our actions. There should be clear consequences for intransigent groups, spoilers and violators. The parties must commit to adhering to any revised timelines and implementation schedules, and adequate funding for the implementation of the revitalized peace Agreement must be determined and secured.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Mogae for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to thank Mr. Wane and Mr. Haysom and His Excellency Mr. Mogae for their briefings today.

I will be very concise because, regrettably, the situation in South Sudan has hardly changed since the Security Council addressed the issue one month ago (see S/PV.8008), which is why Uruguay reiterates its deep concern and alarm over the crisis in the country, whose political leaders are primarily responsible for the current situation. We are particularly concerned, as mentioned in the statements made by our three briefers, about the continuing impact of the situation on the civilian population — hampered humanitarian access, the looting of food reserves — because what is most important is protecting civilians. We therefore urge all parties and armed groups to immediately cease hostilities throughout the territory and to commit now in good faith to dialogue that will enable the revitalization of the August 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

Faced with this difficult scenario, I would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission to relaunch a credible political process. We welcome IGAD's decision to convene a high-level forum in the near future to revitalize the peace Agreement. That will be a good opportunity for the United Nations, the African Union and IGAD to demonstrate their joint work and express an unequivocal message regarding the restoration of the permanent ceasefire, the full implementation of the peace Agreement and the holding of democratic elections at the end of the transition period.

With regard to the Regional Protection Force, we note the extremely slow progress towards its complete deployment. We reiterate our urging of the Government of South Sudan to fully cooperate with the implementation of resolution 2327 (2016), to cease restricting the activities of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and to allow forthwith the full functionality of the Regional Protection Force.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation for the courage and dedication of UNMISS staff and of humanitarian actors, who continue to protect and assist millions of people who are victims of a humanitarian catastrophe in an extremely hazardous operational environment.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Wane, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Haysom, and the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), President Mogae, for their informative briefings.

Japan is deeply concerned about the continued clashes, especially in Upper Nile, despite the unilateral ceasefire declared by President Kiir. Large numbers of people and humanitarian actors have fled due to the Government forces' advance towards Pagak. The Government of South Sudan must be fully aware that the number of displaced people is increasing at a faster rate

in South Sudan than anywhere in the world, with one in three citizens being either a refugee or an internally displaced person. Children under 18, who represent the country's future, account for approximately two thirds of those refugees.

Japan is concerned that the number of humanitarian access incidents in July, which included violence against personnel and assets, were the highest since the crisis began in December 2013. All parties must take prompt and effective action. At the joint meeting in July of the JMEC Humanitarian Working Committee and the Humanitarian High-Level Oversight Committee (HHLOC), it was agreed that the HHLOC would meet quarterly and the Humanitarian Coordination Forum (HCF) would meet monthly. We urge the Government to take steps to ensure that the HHLOC and HCF continue to meet regularly, and that their decisions are faithfully implemented.

We welcome progress in the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) vanguard units. We thank all troop-contributing countries for their efforts, and appreciate Kenya's agreement to deploy troops to the RPF. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that violations of the status of gorces agreement ccurred this month with regard to flight clearances for personnel of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). In a meeting this week with the diplomatic corps in Juba, the Government again announced a policy of cooperation on UNMISS activities, including the deployment of the RPF. Concrete action must follow. We strongly urge the Government's full cooperation with UNMISS, including on the completion of the RPF's deployment and its effective operation, as stipulated in the unanimously adopted resolution 2327 (2016).

We welcome the progress in the various political processes under way, including efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to resolve the violence and revitalize the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, the national dialogue process and the reintegration process of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. Constructive and continuous engagement by all key parties in those processes is the only way to ensure peace in South Sudan. The Council should provide full support to IGAD Heads of State, the African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson and AU High Representative, the Secretary-General and the JMEC Chair in order to ensure success.

To advance those processes with synergy and complementarity, genuine inclusiveness and transparency are key. In that regard, we welcome the news of the recent release of political prisoners by the Government. We urge continued steps to create an environment conducive to the advancement of an inclusive political process. Such steps include the Government's full observance of the unilateral ceasefire, the release of any remaining political prisoners, the establishment of the hybrid court and improved media freedom. A ceasefire and constructive participation in the political process by the opposition groups are also important.

The Council must be united in ensuring that all parties are actively engaged in an inclusive political process to achieve lasting peace in South Sudan.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia thanks the Egyptian presidency for convening this meeting. We also thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Haysom for their briefings. We particularly welcome the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission for the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, His Excellency Mr. Festus Mogae. Bolivia reiterates its support for, and recognition of, the important work he is doing.

South Sudan continues to face a grave economic, political, security and humanitarian crisis with serious consequences that can be felt both domestically as well as in neighbouring countries. It is alarming that there are 1 million South Sudanese refugees in Uganda. As we stated previously, an immediate cessation of hostilities between the parties is a crucial step towards achieving peace.

Bolivia believes strongly that the conflict in South Sudan should be resolved through an inclusive political process. Dialogue, understanding, reconciliation and compliance with the 2015 Agreement are the way forward. In that regard, we must highlight, and above all support, the work being done by the main regional actors to that end.

The efforts of the international community, in particular such regional actors as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union, may provide fresh impetus to, and lead to the resumption of, the political process. In that connection, we welcome the communiqué on the situation in South

Sudan issued by the fifty-eighth extraordinary session of the IGAD Council of Ministers, which provides a clear message and guidelines for the action the Council should support in an united manner. IGAD initiatives, in coordination with the African Union and the United Nations, are the most appropriate alternative to achieve stable peace in South Sudan. In addition, the high-level Revitalization Forum is an invaluable opportunity for that country to emerge from the political crisis in which it finds itself. However, for that to work, the commitment of the authorities and opposition groups must be genuine. We highlight the efforts of His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Museveni to bring together different factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, as well as the role of Chair Mogae in the mediation and revitalization of the political process, which is of crucial importance.

With regard to the current state of the Regional Protection Force (RPF), the deployment of vanguard units is a very important development that we should like to highlight. We welcome the progress and encourage the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Government to continue to work together to facilitate the deployment of the remaining troops. We followed the recent visit of Mr. Lacroix to South Sudan, and we highlight the commitment of the Secretariat to undertake all possible efforts to accelerate the deployment of the Regional Protection Force with 4,000 troops. The presence of the RPF could make it possible for UNMISS to extend its presence to other areas of conflict, provide humanitarian assistance and improve the security situation in rural areas — something that is tied to agricultural development, which is very important to increasing agricultural production, which in turn is necessary to combat the hunger situation, contribute to economic growth and improve the quality of life of the South Sudanese in those areas.

Moreover, Bolivia takes note of the release of political prisoners after the announcement of an amnesty in May. We believe that is a step in the right direction that will strengthen the national dialogue.

Finally, as we have stated on previous occasions, all the efforts of the international community will mean nothing if the Government and the opposition do not enter into a serious and constructive commitment to resolve the conflict, and therefore achieve a stable and lasting peace.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane, Special Envoy Haysom and His Excellency Mr. Mogae for their comprehensive and insightful briefings. I also commend them for their commitment to bring peace to South Sudan under difficult circumstances. My delegation would like to make the following observations and recommendations.

We welcome the arrival of the vanguard units of the Regional Protection Force (RPF), especially the engineering, technical and high-readiness company of the Bangladeshi and Nepalese contingents. We look forward to having the deployment of Rwandan, Ethiopian and Kenyan personnel completed so as to make the RPF fully operational. More efforts, such as the Pakistan level-2 hospital and the deployment of unarmed aerial systems, should be supported and encouraged. The Government should speedily allocate personnel and coordinate the proposed one-stop shop to resolve impediments to the operations of the patrols of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) so that they can have greater freedom of movement. Every proactive measure should be taken to ensure that UNMISS staff do not face arbitrary arrest or detention. We hope that the joint meeting of chiefs of defence forces of the troop contributing-countries, the transitional Government and the United Nations will help resolve all remaining issues.

We are gravely concerned that the continuing Sudan People's Liberation Army military operations in the Equatorias and Greater Upper Nile have led to a sharp escalation in the number of humanitarian incidents and violence against UNMISS and humanitarian personnel. That violence has also led to an increase in the number of internally displaced persons (IDP), most of whom are women and children. Those hostile actions undermine the efforts of the Transitional Government and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission to facilitate the peace process, and lead to further deterioration in the humanitarian and security conditions. We therefore urge all parties to restore a permanent ceasefire and to stop attacks on humanitarian workers so that access to famine-affected locations is not adversely affected. We also encourage the Special Envoy to have more frequent and intensive dialogue with the parties on the protection of women and children, which constitute about 85 per cent of IDPs, and to ensure that vital lifesaving feeding programmes, including for schools, are not stopped.

We commend the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to organize the Revitalization Forum and include all sides, for the effective implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and to prepare for the forthcoming democratic elections. We hope that the outcome of the Forum will lay the foundation necessary for the building of stable State institutions. Simultaneously, we need to ensure that the national dialogue launched in May is truly inclusive and transparent, for which the assistance of UNMISS and the Special Envoy will be needed. That will have to be reinforced by closer cooperation between the Transitional Government and IGAD. At the same time, a truly inclusive national dialogue has to be proceeded by a political process that creates the necessary security and political environment for such inclusion.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan fully supports the concerted efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and IGAD, and will work with the Council and key actors to find a lasting solution to the conflict in South Sudan, which should remain high on our list of priorities.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming your duties as the President of the Security Council for this month. I assure you of our delegation's support and cooperation.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General as requested by resolutions 2304 (2016) and 2327 (2016). I would like to make a few points, if you would allow me, Sir.

On humanitarian access, we have stated in the Council time and again that it is not, has not been and will never be the policy of the Government to hinder or impede access to any humanitarian organization. We understand the critical role they play in helping our people. Therefore, as a Government, we strive to see them succeed in reaching the populace — but we call for responsible reporting. What I think is lacking in that regard is an honest, open dialogue and understanding between the Government and the humanitarian agencies.

As stated by the Secretary-General in his report issued in May, His Excellency the President declared a unilateral ceasefire in the country and called on the army command to heed his call. However, it was not a blank check for the rebels to continue their attacks and provocations on the local population while the army stood aside and watched. Those provocations and hit-and-run attacks led to the hot pursuit that resulted in the eventual capture of Pagak — the headquarters of the rebels — by the South Sudan People's Defense Forces. Today Maiwut state is calmer than before, and life is returning to normal.

At this juncture, we would like to applaud the brotherly gesture of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, through the regional Government of Gambella, in the prompt holding of a security meeting with their counterparts in Maiwut state and in discouraging those who took refuge across the border from using it as a launching pad for attacks in South Sudan. We also applaud the President of the Gambella region for encouraging the South Sudanese refugees to return to their homes, after he had been assured of their safety and protection. We would like to take this opportunity again to call upon the Council to encourage the opposition leaders and their forces who crossed into Ethiopia and other neighbouring countries to embrace the spirit of peace and return home and joint the reconciliation process.

On the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, allow me to say that much has been undertaken by the Transitional Government of National Unity, including under its chapter V. Therefore, the upcoming revitalization process — according to our understanding — which is being led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), is merely intended to maintain the focus and momentum of the parties, rather than to renegotiate the Agreement; just as the national dialogue and Sudan People's Liberation Movement reunification process, which is being shepherded by His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda, is a complementary initiative to consolidate and cement the success of the Peace Agreement.

Allow me to conclude with the question of the Regional Protection Force. As a Government, we agreed unreservedly to the deployment of the Force and to working closely with the United Nations, the African Union and IGAD in seeing the smooth implementation and operationalization of the mandate of those troops in South Sudan. The Government is still committed to that decision and to cooperating with the United

Nations Mission in South Sudan. However, the lack of consultation that we witnessed few days ago in Juba is something we hope will not be the norm, but rather the exception.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8031

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8031st meeting
Thursday, 24 August 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Melki
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Lundkvist
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/695)

Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/715)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-26702 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/695)

Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/715)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Guinea-Bissau and Togo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Modibo Touré, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and His Excellency Mr. Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/695, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and document S/2017/715, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau.

At this meeting, the security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Touré, Ambassador Vieira and Ambassador Elbio Rosselli, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) concerning Guinea-Bissau.

I now give the floor to Mr. Touré.

Mr. Touré (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Egypt on its successful presidency of the Security Council during the month of August.

It is indeed my honour to introduce the most recent report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) (S/2017/695). I would like to provide my analysis of the most recent developments in the process to resolve the crisis in Guinea-Bissau, the immediate steps to be taken, as well as the role that the member States of UNOGBIS should continue to play in order to ensure long-term stability and realize the country's full economic and social development potential.

In that regard, I would like to underscore that the Conakry Agreement and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) road map remain the keys to resolving the current crisis and to helping Guinea-Bissau address the structural causes of its political instability and the recurring institutional deadlocks the country has faced since its independence. The implementation of the Agreement and the road map will require political will from within Guinea-Bissau, as well as long-term commitment from the international community.

(*spoke in English*)

The political situation in Guinea-Bissau has evolved since my last briefing to the Security Council in February (see S/PV.7883). Three months ago, tensions had reached a new peak, leading the Guinea-Bissau base group of international partners to publicly express, on 26 May, its concern about increasing inflammatory rhetoric and the threats of violence through demonstration, and to reiterate the calls for restraint made by ECOWAS and the Security Council, among others. By contrast, in recent weeks the tone of media coverage in the country has quietened down and dialogue aimed at resolving the political impasse within the framework of the Conakry Agreement has resumed between the parties to the crisis.

In July, for the first time since the start of the crisis in 2015, bilateral discussions took place among the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the People's National Assembly and leaders of the main political parties. I congratulate Bissau-Guinean political actors for that positive development. I must also acknowledge the continued efforts of the international community to convey the need for urgency

in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, the commitment of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS to maintain their focus and engagement on the crisis, and their determination to impose, if need be, targeted sanctions on those who obstruct the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, as well as the intense facilitation efforts led by the group of women facilitators with advisory, technical and operational support from UNOGBIS.

Next month, the three-month extension by ECOWAS of the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) to enable political actors to fully implement the Conakry Agreement will expire. The resolution of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau, in the framework of the Conakry Agreement, requires our continued engagement and support. As I brief the Council today, I believe that essential conditions exist for the implementation of the Agreement. To capitalize on recent positive developments and on considerable concerted international efforts, I call upon the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of States and Government and on the Security Council to jointly urge the President of the Republic to abide by his commitment to implement the Conakry Agreement within the time frame provided by ECOWAS; urge the leadership of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and the remaining members of the group of 15 parliamentarians expelled from the PAIGC to complete their effective reintegration into the party; and encourage the leadership of the PAIGC and the leadership of the Party for Social Renewal, as well the three other parties represented in Parliament, to reach an agreement on a stability pact to ensure the stability of the inclusive Government.

As we enter a sensitive electoral period, with the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for 2018 and 2019, respectively, requisite measures must be taken to establish an environment conducive to the holding of free, peaceful and credible polls. I therefore urge Member States to consider ways to financially support the continued presence of ECOMIB through the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement and the completion of the next electoral cycle.

Recent positive developments include the continuation of processes involving national reconciliation with the support of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS); combating drug trafficking and serious organized crime, with joint support from UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; as well as mainstreaming the issues of women's human rights and gender equality. Progress on the implementation of reform of the security sector has been slow, although the process has seen some positive developments, including the recent endorsement of an ambitious three-year joint programme on police, justice and corrections, which focuses on building the capacities of national law enforcement agencies and strengthening the capacities of the national justice system. I have called on the members of the Peacebuilding Commission to kindly support resource mobilization efforts to ensure the timely implementation of that programme

On the economic front, economic growth is forecast to reach 5.2 per cent owing to another robust cashew harvest in the context of favourable international market prices. According to the International Monetary Fund, the country has made notable progress in improving the macroeconomic framework and the management of public expenditures.

(*spoke in French*)

The long-term and concerted commitment of ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations remains crucial in supporting the implementation of the Conakry Agreement. Only by meeting the minimum requirements of the Agreement will the country be able to move forward in the reform process, organize credible and peaceful elections, channel national resources and mobilize the necessary international assistance to support its socioeconomic development for the well-being of its people. I encourage ECOWAS to carry out an assessment of the implementation of the Conakry Agreement as soon as possible through its high-level ministerial committeee, in accordance with the most recent decision taken at the fifty-first ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government . That will allow the Authority to take stock of the challenges that remain and to recommend the appropriate measures to be taken.

I also encourage the ECOWAS Heads of State to organize a meeting on Guinea-Bissau on the sidelines of the upcoming session of the General Assembly. Moreover, the realization of the visit envisaged by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in Bissau during this year, with a view to monitoring the implementation of the decisions of the African Union

and ECOWAS, would be an important contribution to maintaining the commitment of the international community alongside Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, in so much as possible, it would be desirable for such a visit to be made in conjunction with the Security Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my sincere thanks to the Council for the unflagging interest that it has taken in the development of the situation in Guinea-Bissau, as evidenced by the meetings and press statements on the subject. It is important that the Council maintain its commitment. In that regard, a special session of consultations could be devoted to Guinea-Bissau on the sidelines of the upcoming General Assembly session so as to agree on the next steps to be taken so as to ensure the resolution of the crisis.

I congratulate ECOWAS and its new Chair, President Faure Gnassingbé of Togo, and the ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, President Alpha Condé of Guinea, for their tireless commitment to seeking stability in that country and for their mediation efforts. My thanks also go to all regional and international partners, including the African Union, the CPLP and the European Union, with whom UNIOGBIS will continue to work closely so as to help the country stay the course towards sustainable stability and prosperity, which are the hallmarks of peace and regional and international stability.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*) I thank Mr. Touré for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Vieira.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil):I would like to thank you, Sir, for the invitation extended to me in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). In that capacity, I conducted a visit to Bissau and Lisbon, from 25 to 28 July, to obtain first-hand accounts concerning efforts to end the ongoing political impasse.

During the visit, I was able to consult with a broad range of stakeholders, including the President, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, the President of the Supreme Court and a number of Ministers and members of all political parties represented in the National Assembly. I also held meetings with the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, the National Election Commission and representatives of the international community, including the United Nations. Moreover, I took part in meetings with representatives of Guinea-Bissau civil society.

In Lisbon on 28 July, I met the Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), Ms. Maria do Carmo Silveira, at which time we discussed the role of the Community in supporting Guinea-Bissau and in helping find a solution to the political situation. As members of the Council know, Brazil is currently the Chair of the CPLP. It is our firm belief that those increased synergies and complementarities among the relevant international partners have been beneficial for an effective peacebuilding endeavour in Guinea-Bissau.

My consultations served to highlight the complexity of Guinea-Bissau's political impasse. The Conakry Agreement, signed in October 2016, remains a fundamental point of reference for most political actors, although it continues to be the subject of conflicting interpretations. The meetings that I held made it clear that there are two distinct narratives on what was reached in Conakry. For one group there was no agreement on who should have been appointed Prime Minister; others, however, believed that one name was in fact agreed during the negotiations.

Some interlocutors noted that the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) no longer controlled the National Popular Assembly, while others underlined that the 2014 elections gave the majority to the PAIGC and that this could not be changed through the establishment of a block of 15 dissident parliamentarians. I did not find that those differing positions were moving closer together.

Most stakeholders consulted were supportive of the efforts of the women's facilitation group, aimed at facilitating dialogue among key actors so as to overcome the political impasse, while noting that it had been effective as a confidence-building measure and that it had positive effects in de-escalating tensions. It was also instrumental for opening up lines of communication among some actors who had not spoken to one another directly for more than one year.

The group is composed of 10 women from different local organizations. When I was in Bissau, the process had already gone through one round of bilateral meetings between the President and key actors, and my visit coincided with a second round of discussions, on 27 and 28 July. It was decided that during this facilitation process no declarations should be made to

the press. The actors initially involved in the dialogue were the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, the President of the Supreme Court and the Presidents of the PAIGC, the Party of the Social Renovation and the group of 15 dissident parliamentarians of the PAICG. The other three political parties with representation in the National Assembly were also invited to the second round of meetings.

In my meeting with President José Mário Vaz, he was very supportive of this process and affirmed he would wait for a report of the group before making any decision on next steps. According to the report issued on 2 August, the facilitation has contributed to fewer incidents of violence, a de-escalation of tensions and the fostering of dialogue in order to reach a consensual solution and implement the Conakry Agreement.

I also had an opportunity to be in contact with two other initiatives from local civil society. A network of youth organizations presented to me their view that there had been little effort in having the youth population involved in decisions on policy. Additionally, I was briefed by the Organizing Committee of the National Conference, which hopes to identify a model of national reconciliation to be considered at a national conference to be held in early 2018.

The National Electoral Commission (CNE) informed me that it had already finalized a timeline for holding legislative elections in May 2018, which must now be approved by the President of the Republic. It noted that prior to the elections, it was necessary for the CNE to update the voter-registration lists. That process should happen between January and March 2018. There are currently 775,500 registered voters, and the number is expected to increase. In the CNE's view, the elections could be held within the foreseen framework, provided that the needed resources are obtained.

One point that some interlocutors expressed to me was that the CNE President's mandate had already ended and that the position was currently being occupied ad interim. They informed me that the appointment of a new Commission had to be approved by the National People's Assembly, which would be difficult in view of the paralysis in the Parliament.

Sufficient time must be allowed for technical preparations, including the update of the voter-registration lists. However, many believe that elections alone cannot solve the impasse without a political solution to the crisis. Finally, it is important to note that some stakeholders requested that the United Nations follow and support the electoral process in Guinea-Bissau.

The leadership of the armed forces again provided assurances of their strict respect for the constitutional order. A request was made for cooperation to train and modernize the armed forces and to resume their participation in international peace operations. Concern was expressed regarding the fact that there had been no progress in the implementation of plans for the creation of a pension fund for the military.

Several interlocutors expressed concern about the possible negative effect of an eventual departure of the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB). Some of my interlocutors also called for sanctions to be imposed on civilians, in particular on politicians, for not implementing the Conakry Agreement. On the other hand, other stakeholders expressed their strong opposition to that idea, seeing it as interference in the country's internal politics.

With regard to the police force, a request was made to develop capacity. The importance of countering international crime, enhancing border controls and maritime security and supporting the expansion of community policing were underlined.

With respect to public demonstrations, it was noted that, following confrontations between the police and demonstrators in April, the situation had become calmer. However, some interlocutors raised the issue that public demonstrations had been restricted. Many stakeholders noted that little progress had been made with regard to the prevailing climate of impunity.

Several interlocutors noted that the economy was doing well. The gross domestic product is expected to grow at around 5 per cent in 2017. The Government remains the largest employer in the country. The President underlined to me the importance of making Guinea-Bissau food sufficient. However, other actors noted that many people continued to struggle, with the lack of health and education services. Interlocutors also noted that in 2015 the Brussels Round Table had pledged $1.5 billion in support of the Terra Ranka programme. They stressed the importance that donors fulfil their pledges. However, it should be underlined that a solution to the current crisis would enable the international community to fulfil its commitments.

It will also provide the country with stability and contribute to its development, benefiting the people of Guinea-Bissau.

I would like to make the following final remarks, which have also been endorsed by CPLP. I would conclude my statement by reaffirming that the PBC will continue to make every effort to support the country. I reiterate the PBC's backing for the various efforts made by international and regional stakeholders aimed at assisting the Bissau-Guineans to end the political stalemate. I urge all key political actors to engage in a national dialogue with a view to implementing the Bissau six-point road map and the Conakry Agreement. I also welcome the political consultations that have taken place with the support of the group of Wwmen facilitators. I underline the importance of holding elections in the country with the necessary preparations, in particular the update of the voter-registration lists. I congratulate the armed forces of Guinea-Bissau for respecting the Constitution. I recognize the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States in the mediation of the crisis as well as the important role being played by ECOMIB.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Vieira for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Rosselli.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): In my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), on Guinea-Bissau, I have the honour of briefing the members of the Council on the visit that I conducted to Guinea-Bissau from 13 to 15 June of this year.

The purpose of the visit was to collect first-hand information on the effective implementation of the sanctions imposed under resolution 2048 (2012) and assess the political developments in Guinea-Bissau. I was accompanied by the Political Coordinator of Senegal and the Secretary of the Committee, who took part in all the meetings we had in Bissau.

In the five years since sanctions were adopted, this was the first time that a Chair of the Committee visited the country. Accordingly, I had the impression that the political actors and civil society were interested in engaging in dialogue and presenting their views to the Committee. That is why I believe that it is essential to have greater dialogue between the Committee — and the Council — and the citizens of Guinea-Bissau.

I was happy that I was able to get to know all the interlocutors that were included in the mandate issued by the Committee and to have been able hold fruitful discussions with them. During our conversations, I stressed the importance of pursuing dialogue and collaboration with the various interested parties — national and international — with a view to resolving the political crisis andfinding a lasting solution. I also stressed that the international community continued to support Guinea-Bissau but that it was necessary to take concrete measures to create a stable political environment and to receive the pledged funds in Brussels in March 2015. I further highlighted that the situation in Guinea-Bissau remained of great importance to the Security Council.

While the situation in Guinea-Bissau remains stable overall, uncertainty over the resolution of the current political crisis could easily undermine the calm in the country. Thus far, the constitutional order does not seem to be directly challenged, but the ambiguity in the division of powers between the President and the Prime Minister continues to foment political strife. In addition, uncertainty in the political environment has eroded the confidence of donors and investors, as the root causes of instability in Guinea-Bissau remain unresolved. International and regional efforts to find a durable solution to the political crisis appear to have no effect on the ground, since none of the provisions of the Conakry Agreement have yet been implemented, mainly due to a lack of political will.

The country continues to be affected by the uncertainty of the political situation without any clear signs of substantive progress towards a solution in the near future. However, thus far, the security situation has remained stable without episodes of violence — the army has not interfered in political controversies; human rights, in general, seem to be respected; and constitutional order is not directly challenged. I think it is important to emphasize that the current situation might not be sustainable for much longer and that the patience of the military and the population could end at any time. That is why it is urgent to find a political solution to the crisis.

Many interlocutors pointed out that the political crisis was generally perceived to have been caused by the lack of political will to arrive at a solution and was based on personal interests and ambitions rather than different religious, ideological, ethnic or philosophical considerations. In that regard, while all political actors

expressed their readiness to engage in dialogue and find a solution to the political crisis, they each blamed some group or person for the stagnation. That shows an uncompromising attitude, whereas what is needed are specific concessions.

Almost all the interlocutors pointed out that since 2012 the military had respected the constitutional order and the laws of the country, including refraining from interfering in the political life of Guinea-Bissau. Many speakers believe that it would be appropriate to remove persons from the sanctions list on the basis of their commendable conduct. It should be noted that the persons who are subject to sanctions continue to serve in the the army and some have been promoted to higher ranks, which has contributed to the feeling, within a segment of the population, that there is a climate of impunity.

The general feeling among most interlocutors was that sanctions remained effective as a deterrent to possible disruptive elements, both military and civilian. However, while the sanctions were considered to be effective, many pointed out that the measures did not appropriately target those who merited sanctions and called, in turn, for sanctions against civilians, particularly politicians. Those who were not part of the Government indicated clearly that the responsibility for the political crisis lay with the political class, political parties and, in general, civilians driven by personal interests rather than the interests of the entire country.

Since last year, two designated persons have travelled outside of Guinea-Bissau. However, they were detained at the destination airport and repatriated to Guinea-Bissau. No other report has indicated that other persons have violated the travel ban. That is a positive sign that Member States are increasingly vigilant and are striving to implement sanctions. There is still some confusion as to the scope of the restriction on the travel ban. In that regard, I made sure to explain the procedures to the authorities during the visit and also provided them with a copy of the guidelines for carrying out the work of the Committee.

In a number of meetings, many emphasized the positive role played by the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) in helping to prevent the constitutional order from being challenged, although it is clear that the role of ECOMIB is very symbolic and that, in the event of large-scale armed intervention by military forces, the Mission would be ill-equipped to match it due to its limited capacity.

The visit reflects the positive momentum of the cooperation between the Committee and the Government, which should be maintained and increased. I submitted a report to the Committee on 17 July and made recommendations. In particular, I focused on the need to review the list of sanctions, taking into account the current situation and developments in Guinea-Bissau, as well as the views expressed by those I spoke with during my visit. I also believe that we should exercise caution during the review process.

I would like to thank the authorities of Guinea-Bissau for their warm welcome and the fruitful meetings. I also wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Modibo Touré, and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau for the excellent support provided during the visit.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Rosselli for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will now make a statement in my national capacity.

I would first like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Modibo Touré, as well as the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Mauro Vieira, for their briefings today.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau has improved as compared to that of five years ago and, in that regard, the international community has made tireless efforts to consolidate constitutional order in the country. However, Guinea-Bissau has been undergoing a political crisis over the past two years and, although the situation remains stable in general, the uncertainty surrounding a possible resolution of the crisis threatens to undermine the calm in the country.

Let me point out that the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau is not based on ideological, partisan, religious or ethnic differences. Rather, it results from, and is fuelled by, the personal differences of some of its main political leaders. If we continue along that path, we will find ourselves only one step away from undermining all the efforts made to date. That is not because the

international community has left Guinea-Bissau to its own devices. On the contrary, the United Nations, the countries of the region and other international partners have provided Guinea-Bissau with all the necessary tools to become a success story. But those efforts will continue to be in vain if its political leaders do not do their part.

Today we are facing a political crisis with domestic roots, where the political class seems to ignore the support initiatives of the international community. The last and most important effort to resolve this crisis is the six-point road map and, within it, the Conakry Agreement. Uruguay urges that the provisions contained in the Agreement be implemented without further delay in order to find a solution to a crisis that primarily harms the civilian population of Guinea-Bissau. We commend ongoing efforts towards dialogue, which undoubtedly contribute to resolving the situation and to encouraging the participation of women in political decisions. However, we reiterate that tangible results will not be achieved until leaders take concrete steps to implement the Conakry Agreement.

The worrying information contained in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/695) concerning various restrictions on the freedom of expression is noteworthy. We encourage the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to ensure that fundamental freedoms are respected, promoted and protected for all of the country's inhabitants.

In connection with the sanctions imposed under resolution 2048 (2012), allow me to offer some observations in my capacity as the representative of Uruguay, on the basis of the information I obtained at first hand during my visit to the country from 13 to 15 June, during which I met with the highest-ranking Government authorities, politicians and civil society groups. We believe that the penalties applied to certain high-ranked military officials in Guinea-Bissau have been a fitting and useful tool that has played an important role in the consolidation of the democratic order in the country, and we welcome the commitment and action of the international community in that respect.

My interlocutors were almost unanimous in their view that, to date, the members of the military subject to sanctions have conducted themselves in a praiseworthy manner and have refrained from interfering in national politics. The individuals listed on the sanctions list in accordance with resolution 2048 (2012) are not responsible for the political impasse that reigns in Guinea-Bissau today. The sanctions regime as well as the list of individuals subject to sanctions pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) have remained the same since their establishment, although the circumstances certainly have changed. The Security Council should initiate a frank, critical and constructive review on this matter, including the definition of criteria for an eventual removal of names from the list of individuals subject to sanctions.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia welcomes the briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), Mr. Modibo Touré. We are also grateful for the briefings by Ambassadors Elbio Rosselli and Mauro Vieira in their respective capacities as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), on Guinea-Bissau, and of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. We also welcome the presence of the Ambassador of Togo, representing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and of the Ambassador of Guinea-Bissau.

Bolivia is following closely the situation of political and social instability in Guinea-Bissau, and we take note of the relative calm in the country. It is clear that the current context is the result of stagnation in the implementation of the agreements reached by the parties to the conflict, notably the Conakry Agreement of October 2016, which is ultimately the fundamental framework for a peaceful settlement of the crisis and the pursuit of lasting and sustainable peace.

We are also concerned by the consequences of the political and social instability on crucial State institutions, as noted by ECOWAS following its high-level ministerial visit in April.

In that context, we again commend the active participation of the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations, through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNIOGBIS, and their continued efforts to bring about rapprochement between the parties in conflict and to provide assistance in the security sector and in the political field with a view to encouraging an inclusive Government.

We also encourage and highlight the initiative of the women's forum for peace. The efforts of women

in Guinea-Bissau in the pursuit of a political solution demonstrate that the gender perspective and the participation of women in mediation and dialogue at all levels is fundamental.

Bolivia rejects any action that may destabilize or jeopardize the continuity of any process of dialogue and reconciliation established with the participation of all the parties involved. We call upon the parties to definitively consolidate agreements in line with the inclusive national dialogue, which will enable members of all sectors of civil society, Government and political parties represented in the National Assembly to reach consensus in order to give effect to those agreements in a constructive manner. We call for a legitimate commitment to a lasting political solution owned, led and determined by Guinea-Bissau, for the sole benefit of its people and in strict respect for that country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

On the subject of sanctions, Bolivia welcomes the work of Uruguay's Ambassador Rosselli in his capacity as Chair of the 2048 Sanctions Committee. As he himself stated, his was the first visit to Guinea-Bissau since the establishment of the Committee five years ago. The visit allows us to have information regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the sanctions. It is necessary to emphasize how important it is that the Security Council — and its subsidiary bodies in particular, especialy the sanctions committees — maintain coordination with local authorities. In that regard, the visit of Ambassador Rosselli is worth highlighting and commending. We reiterate that sanctions should not be an end in themselves. Moreover, it is necessary to carry out periodic evaluations of sanctions in order to analyse their effectiveness and to be able to make modifications where necessary. In this case, the conclusions of the visit of the Ambassador Rosselli should guide our future steps.

Along the same lines, Bolivia reiterates its categorical rejection of the application of unilateral sanctions. They constitute a flagrant violation of multilateralism and a serious threat to the international order, as they are illegal measures that extend the jurisdiction and the internal legislation of one State over another, thereby violating the principles of equality, sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States.

Finally, we urge all donor countries and agencies to continue to fulfil their commitments by contributing and combining efforts that are conducive to the definitive resolution of the conflict. In times of political, institutional and social crisis, ensuring the well-being of the population, in particular the most vulnerable segments, must and should be the overriding interest that determines the path towards lasting stability in Guinea-Bissau.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mrs. Pinto Lopes d'Alva (Guinea-Bissau): I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting my delegation to the Security Council table. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and Egypt on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of August and to wish you successful deliberations.

Allow me to exted to you, Sir, and to all Council members the greetings of His Excellency Mr. José Mário Vaz, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, on behalf of Bissau-Guineans, with special thanks to the Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, for the report on the situation in Guinea-Bissa (S/2017/695) presented by his Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Modibo Touré. The continued support of the United Nations to our country through the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and the entire United Nations country team on the ground, working together with Bissau-Guineans for sustainable peace and development, is very much appreciated.

The commitment of the United Nations to Guinea-Bissau is undoubtedly extensive and diversified. It touches almost all sectors of our political and institutional life, from defence and security to health, education, culture, the promotion of women, human rights, the fight against transnational organized crime, social communication for national reconciliation and constitutional order and peacebuilding — as is clearly detailed in the report. For all that support, we cannot but express our boundless gratitude and recognition of the commitment of the United Nations to our country. We hope that the engagement of the United Nations will continue to lead us to much-needed peace so that, together with our bilateral and other multilateral partners, we can finally engage in new partnerships for the development of Guinea-Bissau.

Permit me also to thank His Excellency Mr. Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Chair of Guinea-Bissau configuration

of the Peacebuilding Commission and Chair of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), for his statements in those two capacities.

The engagement of the Commission, demonstrated by the recent visit of the configuration to Guinea-Bissau, where Ambassador Vieira had a chance to meet personally with the main political stakeholders and civil society, served to reassure our people that the international community is still standing with them on many fronts, through the United Nations, in their quest for the consolidation of peace.

As Chair of the CPLP, Ambassador Vieira's stop in Lisbon, with a peace message on Guinea-Bissau, once again reassures us that our group of nine Portuguese-speaking countries, which share not only a language but also a culture and history as well, also has an important role to play in fostering dialogue and long-lasting peace in our country.

We would like to thank His Excellency Ambassador Elbio Rosselli, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations and Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), concerning Guinea-Bissau, for his statement and for the report on his recent visit to our country, where he also met with all the relevant political actors. We believe that visit enabled him to better assess the present sanctions on Guinea- Bissau.

The diligent efforts of our subregion and of the African Union to achieve peace in Guinea-Bissau have been important. We thank His Excellency Ambassador Kokou Kpayedo, Permanent Representative of Togo to the United Nations and present Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for his diligence and for his statement to the Security Council.

We are aware that we bear the ultimate responsibility for resolving the crisis in our country. We understand the concern expressed in the report about the evolution of the political situation and the final observations, which focus on the political and institutional impasse that, unfortunately, we are still not able to overcome. In general, the analyses that were done do not reflect a lack of objectivity.

Without intending to comment on the analysis and conclusions of the report, allow me to express our appreciation for the patience and the wisdom that has characterized United Nations interventions and the actions of ECOWAS and African Union on the front lines of the process to resolve the situation in Guinea-Bissau. Such patience and wisdom will assist in finding the sustainable solution that we all seek, with the support of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations. Such a solution will require a strong and irreplaceable internal commitment from State institutions and political parties. That point is very well reflected in the report and we cannot agree more that, indeed, Bissau-Guineans will have to work harder to make that commitment.

From the outside looking in, it seems that politics has come to an end in Guinea-Bissau. However, the truth is that our institutions, as strategic political actors, are seeking answers and finding solutions that are adequate and sustainable. The recent initiative by the group of women facilitators of dialogue, which was deservedly embraced by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau and gained immediate visibility, was the result of efforts made at many levels, but always away from the media spotlight. We thank those courageous women for their important work. In Guinea-Bissau, since our struggle for independence, women have always been involved in every aspect of our political life and there are no better messengers of peace than women.

One of the most significant things that should be pointed out is the fact that the institutional crisis remains somehow circumscribed in the ambit of political institutions, Parliament and Government. In reality, we could say that it is a political party crisis, which has disarticulated the functional relationship between the National Assembly and the Government.

There is a need for broader dialogue, in particular within political parties, which is the recognized path that must be taken to generate consensus, make commitments, dissolve internal political tensions and break the persistent political-institutional impasse that has become entrenched in our political order. It is the path outlined by the report of Secretary-General, and it is the path that President Vaz has always called for. Despite the institutional crises, Guinea-Bissau lives in peace and there have been no disturbances for the past five years.

We can state that there have been no human rights violations in Guinea-Bissau worthy of report in recent years. The everyday life of civil servants has become increasingly normal, as salaries are now paid early and regularly, like never before seen in Guinea-Bissau.

Political tension, which is normal in a democracy, has nevertheless been reduced and is almost insignificant. We therefore do not agree with the sanctions because they seem excessive and counterproductive in the light of Guinea-Bissau's pol: ical context.

In conclusion, we have faith that Guinea-Bissau will overcome its institutional crises. With the Council's continued support, solidarity and patience, we will consolidate our democracy by working out our differences, achieve long-lasting peace and lead our nation to the path of development and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Togo.

Mr. Kpayedo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to thank you, Sir, for inviting us to today's meeting. We also thank you for steering the work of the Security Council this month.

Like those who spoke before me, I would like to commend today's briefing of the very detailed report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/695). Its relevant findings are an exceilent description of the situation on the ground and reflect the willingness of international community, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to help Guinea-Bissau to resolve the crisis by peaceful means — an inclusive and sincere political dialogue and appropriate reforms.

Driven by a deep concern about the stalemate in the process aimed at resolving Guinea-Bissau's political and institutional crisis, which has lasted for more than two years, despite the fact that stakeholders have signed the Conakry Agreement on 14 October 2016 in order to find a sustainable solution to the crisis in the country, the fifty-first ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held in Monrovia on 4 June, called upon all political actors to take all the necessary, immediate measures to ensure the smooth functioning of Guinea-Bissau's State institutions, in the interests of the population. To that end, the summit requested that the international community and development partners honour their pledges and commitments.

Following the assessment of the situation delivered by the high-level ministerial committee tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Conakry Agreement after its visit to the country on 23 and 24 April, the summit took note of the promises made by stakeholders to ensure the implementation of the Conakry Agreement. It called upon all actors concerned to strictly adhere to the terms of the Agreement. In the light of all that I have mentioned and given the political stalemate, which is a detriment to stability and social peace, the Monrovia summit reaffirmed the primacy of the Conakry Agreement as the only credible basis on which to resolve the crisis.

For its part, and to demonstrate its commitment and good will, ECOWAS decided to extend the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau by an additional three months. Its withdrawal had initially been scheduled for 30 June in order to maintain the calm required to enable all Bissau-Guinean political actors and stakeholders to implement the Agreement.

Unfortunately, two months following the extension of the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, motivated by the request of the President of Guinean-Bissau, Mr. José Mário Vaz, to give a chance to the success of the initiative of a group of women who have been committed to facilitating the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, no significant progress has been made with regard to the conflicting issues fuelling the crisis. The latter include, inter alia, the appointment of a Prime Minister by consensus during the interim period leading up to the 2018 legislative elections, the formation of an inclusive Government and the reintegration of the 15 members of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde.

Lastly, with a view to ensuring a rapid and lasting exit from the crisis and after commending the neutrality observed thus far by the Guinea-Bissau army, ECOWAS has affirmed its steadfast determination to implement, if necessary, sanctions targeted against all those who would impede the proper implementation of the Conakry Agreement — the first step in the implementation of the ECOWAS six-point road map signed in Bissau on 10 September 2016.

At its fifty-first ordinary session held in Monrovia on 4 June, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government elected the President of the Republic of Togo, His Excellency Mr. President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, as Chair of the of the subregional Authority. The new Chair immediately and urgently appealed to the parties to the conflict to exercise

restraint and responsibility so as to ensure every chance of a negotiated and durable exit from the crisis. He also held meetings on 16 June in Lomé with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General concerning short-term prospects and modalities of support to ensure the success of the ECOWAS mediation process.

In relying on the Conakry Agreement, he believes that Guinea-Bissau is at a decisive turning point regarding its future and that henceforth it is now up to all stakeholders, on the one hand, to accelerate the pace of normalization by settling all the ongoing disputes and, on the other hand, to concentrate the vital forces of the nation on the tasks of recovery and economic development so as to meet the immense expectations of its youth and general population.

Moreover, he did not fail to warn of the dangers of the persistence of the crisis in a region of West Africa that is facing an increasing number of new dangers, first and foremost among which are terrorism and transnational organized crime, which are fuelled, to a large extent, by chronic political instability, poverty and the social disarray they engender.

Finally, I would like to convey the gratitude of the ECOWAS senior leaders to the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries for their unyielding and continued confidence in and support for the mediation efforts of ECOWAS.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8032

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8032nd meeting
Monday, 28 August 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skau
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2017/726)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-26955 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2017/726)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to participate in this meeting. Mr. Salamé is joining the meeting via video-teleconference from Tripoli.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/726, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings from Mr. Salamé and Ambassador Carl Skau, representative of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya.

I wish to warmly welcome Mr. Salamé, as he is participating in the Council's proceedings for the first time in his new capacity, and I now give him the floor.

Mr. Salamé: At the outset, I would like to congratulate Egypt on its presidency of the Security Council this month.

I am very pleased to be speaking to the Council from the compound of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in Tripoli. My presence here is intended to signify the Mission's and my personal resolve to working as closely as possible with Libyans in Libya. A month ago I assumed my position as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNSMIL. I was fortunate enough to have already met Prime Minister Serraj and Marshal Haftar in Paris on 25 July and to have had exchanges with them before taking up my post, as well as to receive on my nomination hundreds of calls, letters and e-mails from representatives of all walks of Libyan society.

On 5 August, I made my first official visit to Tripoli and met with the Prime Minister and Mr. Abdelrahman Al-Sweihli, Chairman of the High Council of State. The following day I also met with Mr. Saleh Issa, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Libyan officials. The trip launched my consultations with Libyans across the political spectrum and the country. Since then, I have been present in Libya as often as possible and have been to towns across most of its regions — Tripoli, Al Qubba, Benghazi, Misrata, Zintan and Al Bayda. I am sorry to say that due to external restrictions I have yet to visit the south; in fact, a trip scheduled for last Thursday was cancelled a few hours before departure, but we are working hard to make sure that it happens as soon as possible. In each place I met with political figures, military and security officials and women, intellectuals, activists and young people. I firmly believe that our attachment to the Libyan Political Agreement as a reference should not prevent us from reaching out to all Libyans, whatever their status and their past or present positions. Rather, we must reach out so that there is reconciliation for all.

In my external consultations, I have sought to prioritize Libya's neighbours. They include Tunisia, where I also thanked the authorities for their support and hospitality to UNSMIL over the past three years. In Egypt, I met with the officials in charge of the Libyan dossier, representatives of the League of Arab States, and some of the leading members of the Libyan community established there. When I was in Algeria, Prime Minister Ouyahia and Foreign Minister Messahel reiterated their support for our efforts. I also visited Italy, where Prime Minister Gentiloni Silveri and his ministers expressed their commitment to the success of our efforts. All of those countries will benefit from a stable, peaceful and reconciled Libya, as will many more. I look forward to travelling to the Republic of the Congo next week, where the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya is convening key Libyan actors in Brazzaville. It is my intention to extend the scope of my visits in the coming weeks and months to other neighbours, countries in the region and beyond.

From my meetings with Libyans, a clear picture is emerging. People are frustrated with their deteriorating

living conditions. I passed the same bank in Tripoli repeatedly from 10 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night and saw so many people I thought it was a demonstration, but they were just waiting to access a fraction of their month's salary — the equivalent of what is now worth $25.

It is unnatural that in this wealthy country, university departments are closing one after the other because the outrageous gap in the exchange rate has led foreign faculty to quit en masse. People are tired of the endless cuts in electricity and water, which in turn take down the telephone system and the Internet. Libyans cannot understand being poor in a country rich with natural resources, an oil-producing country where they must queue, sometimes for a day, to get 20 litres of petrol.

The impression of a now well-rooted political economy of predation is palpable, as if the country were fuelling its own crisis with its own resources to the benefit of the few and the frustration of the many. There is clearly a serious problem of governance that can hardly wait to be addressed.

The people's welfare is, obviously, a fundamental element in Libya's future stability. I intend to work closely with our partners to ensure that we are fully coordinating in realizing a macroeconomic vision for the country while helping the authorities provide basic services. Unless the economic challenges are addressed, and soon, the humanitarian crisis in Libya will deepen. For civilians in need, access to humanitarian assistance should go unimpeded and relief personnel should be protected.

Of particular concern is the present situation in Derna where we have repeatedly called for civilians to have freedom of movement and actively worked for the entry of basic necessities to the city. The other challenge which Libyans are concerned about is, of course, their security. There is much fear of criminality, of kidnapping and the threats posed by the widespread proliferation of arms. My first night in Tripoli, I fell asleep to the protracted staccato of gunfire. Civilians are killed or injured across Libya as a result of sporadic armed clashes and explosive remnants of war. Thousands are also detained for prolonged periods of time, many with no prospects of a fair trial.

The terrible attack at the al-Fuqaha checkpoint on Thursday, 24 August, which saw the brutal killing of nine soldiers and two civilians was attributed to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). The Libyans I have spoken to want an end to uncertainty and instability, and they respect those who are working to bring the situation under control. In Tripoli and certain other parts of the country, the security situation has truly improved. Oil production has increased markedly, enabling the Presidency Council and Central Bank of Libya to work together to deliver on the budget. These are positive steps, but the key to lasting stability requires addressing the overarching political situation. In this regard, the main issues that dominate the political landscape are as follows.

First, with regard to the upcoming two-year anniversary of the Libyan Political Agreement on 17 December, there is uncertainty over what the end of the transitional period outlined in the Agreement actually means. One of the most immediate tasks is to help build a consensus among Libyans on the legal and political significance of that date. An institutional vacuum at this crucial time will not serve Libya's interests. Most of my interlocutors have raised with me their thoughts on amending the Libyan Political Agreement. A consensus is emerging on this issue and I hope to be able to announce some movement on it in the coming days.

Secondly, with regard to the prospect of adopting a constitution, the vote by the Constitution Drafting Assembly on 29 July to finalize the draft text was an important milestone. However, at the moment, the legality of the vote is being considered by the courts.

Thirdly, there are growing and widespread calls for fresh elections. Before these take place, it would be wise to ensure that the political and technical preconditions for successful elections be addressed and in particular a commitment on the part of all parties to accept the election results. Elections are not about accumulation, but about peaceful and organized rotation.

Finally, a political package is required to bring these three elements together coherently. In that regard, sequencing is the name of the game. Libyans can successfully go into these three processes only if they define in what order and with what urgency they should do so, and if we help them combine the three into one single package which most, if not all, players consider acceptable.

In any case, any efforts to forge a solution must be Libyan led and Libyan owned. The United Nations is here to support them in their endeavours and certainly

not to replace them. We will in particular work with them to promote the rapid reunification of their political and financial institutions.

Libya's problems are not just confined to the Libyan people. The presence of ISIS, Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist groups, foreign fighters and mercenaries, the trafficking of arms and the cross-border black market economy are challenges which extend across Libya's borders and impact its neighbours and the wider international community. Three days ago, deadly clashes near the border with Chad reminded all of the regional sensitivity of Libya's present conditions.

Irregular migration, and the revenue it generates for smuggler networks, has also proven to be a direct threat to stability in parts of Libya. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees who are stuck in Libya often suffer abuses and detention in inhuman conditions. We need to act, we need to act together and we need to act now.

We are not starting from zero. Thanks to my predecessors and the concerted efforts of Member States, we have the political framework of the Libyan Political Agreement. There is fairly widespread recognition in Libya that the current situation cannot drag on indefinitely. The commitments to a ceasefire and a political rather than military solution to the crisis made in the Paris communiqué need to be supported by concrete actions to avoid renewed military escalation.

To deliver on our mandate, we continue to prepare to ramp up the presence of the United Nations family in Tripoli and from Tripoli across the country, as security conditions allow. A convoy of UNSMIL personnel was attacked with gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades on 28 June. One staff member was injured and we are really fortunate that there were no further casualties.

The United Nations presence in Libya is already significantly larger than any other diplomatic mission, and it will soon expand further. We must remain aware that there are real risks in operating in Libya, and it is incumbent on me to ensure that those risks are mitigated as effectively as possible.

I would like to thank all the Member States that have worked to support the Libyan Political Agreement since its signature, who have contributed to fighting ISIS and other listed terrorist groups and who have contributed to stabilizing the country. I look forward to working with all of those Libyan and international stakeholders to bring together our political, security and economic efforts in a coherent and coordinated manner.

I appreciate the efforts of all Governments and organizations working to promote peace and reconciliation among Libyans. But a proliferation of initiatives to mediate somehow risks confusing the political landscape. There is a window of opportunity, and it is in the hands of the Libyan people to seize it. I would not have assumed this role if I did not believe that a peaceful and positive end to the Libyan crisis were possible. For that reason, during the upcoming meeting of the General Assembly, Secretary-General António Guterres plans to convene a high-level meeting where an action plan will be presented. I will not go into further details as it would be premature prior to the conclusion of my round of consultations with the Libyans.

The United Nations stands willing and able to act in the best interests of all Libyans and with all parties equally. I very much hope that with the trust of our Libyan partners and the confidence of the regional organizations and concerned Member States, we will be able to strengthen and unify our collective efforts and together restore Libya to its rightful place in the family of nations — as one united, stable and prosperous country.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Salamé for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Skau.

Mr. Skau (Sweden): In accordance with paragraph 24 (e) of resolution 1970 (2011), of 26 February 2011, I have the honour to report to the Security Council on the work of the Committee established by that same resolution. The current reporting period is from 8 June to 28 August 2017, during which time the Committee met once in informal consultations and conducted additional work via the silence procedure.

At the outset, I would like to recall that on 29 June, the Security Council adopted resolution 2362 (2017). By that resolution, the Council inter alia expanded the applicability of the measures aimed at preventing illicit exports of crude oil from Libya to cover petroleum, including refined petroleum products. The Council also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Libya to 15 November 2018. Both of those elements have had an impact on the activities of the Committee during the current reporting period.

With respect to the first element, following notifications received from the Libyan Government, the Committee included on its sanctions list two vessels — the *Capricorn* and the *Lynn S* — for attempting to illicitly export gasoil from Libya. The flag States of the two vessels, Tanzania and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, respectively, now have certain obligations vis-à-vis those vessels, and all Member States are required to prohibit the vessels from entering their ports unless such entry is necessary for the purpose of an inspection, in the case of emergency or in the case of return to Libya. The listings, which were accomplished in a matter of days from the time of notification, on 21 July and 2 August, are valid for a period of three months, unless terminated earlier by the Committee. In addition to the flag States, the Committee has written to several other Member States, such as the reported States of origin and destination, seeking any further relevant information.

Concerning the second element, the Committee met on 21 August to hear a presentation by the newly reconstituted Panel of Experts on its work programme under the extended mandate. In the discussion, Committee members addressed questions or comments to the experts, who provided additional information and clarifications. As some may recall, at its last briefing (see S/PV.7961), the Chair informed the Council that the Committee was considering the recommendations from the final report of the Panel under its previous mandate. Of the 16 recommendations, five were addressed to the Council, six to the Committee, and five to Member States, including Libya. The Committee has since agreed to take action on five recommendations, one of which was also discussed during the informal consultations of 21 August.

With respect to the arms embargo, during the period under review, the Committee approved a request for exemption under paragraph 9 (c) of resolution 1970 (2011) from the Netherlands. The Committee also responded to a request for guidance received from the United Nations Support Mission in Libya concerning the scope and application of paragraph 10 of resolution 2095 (2013), which relates to supplies of non-lethal military equipment, and the provision of any technical assistance, training or financial assistance, intended solely for security or disarmament assistance to the Libyan Government.

The Committee further received an initial report and a final report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 10 of resolution 2292 (2016), by EUNAVFOR MED Operation SOPHIA, of a vessel inspection undertaken on 19 June on the high seas off the coast of Libya. Arms and related materiel were found on board this vessel — the same vessel, on the same route, which had been inspected by EUNAVFOR once before, on 1 May. The Committee again notified Libya of the inspection. During the reporting period, the Committee also received the final report of the 1 May inspection from EUNAVFOR. I should recall here that the authorizations as set out in resolution 2292 (2016) were extended by the Council in its resolution 2357 (2017) of 12 June 2017, for a further period of 12 months.

Also in the context of the arms embargo, the Committee received the names of the authorized signatories from Libya for requests for exemptions from the arms embargo and for end-user certificates, as per the requirements contained in the Committee's implementation assistance notice No. 2 concerning the arms embargo. A response is now under consideration.

Concerning the assets freeze, the Committee received a notification from Greece under paragraph 16 (a) (i) of resolution 2009 (2011). In its response, the Committee encouraged further bilateral contact between Greece and Libya on the matter, and provided guidance on the requirements of the notification procedure. The Committee's consideration of an exemption request submitted by Canada, pertaining to an asset owned by a listed individual, is still ongoing. Two of the five Panel recommendations on which the Committee agreed to take action also related to the assets freeze, albeit one is pending further information from the Panel. The recommendations pertain to the Stolen Assets Recovery Unit of the Central Bank of Libya, and the Committee considers that a well-functioning Unit could be an important partner in monitoring the assets freeze and preventing the misappropriation of funds.

On the travel ban, the Committee approved an advancement of the return travel of Ms. Safia Farkash Al-Barassi, who had been authorized to travel between Egypt and Oman The Committee also approved an extension to the exemption request for Mr. Sayyid Mohammed Qadhaf Al-Dam, who had been authorized to travel between Libya and Egypt. Both listed individuals were authorized to travel on the grounds of humanitarian needs.

Lastly, on 27 June, in my capacity as Chair, I participated in a joint open briefing of the Committee

established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism; the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, on challenges in countering terrorism in Libya. A summary of the discussions is available on the 1373 Committee's website. The Committee also received one implementation report from a Member State.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ambassador Skau for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Bolivia wishes to express its condemnation of yesterday's attack in Afghanistan, which took the lives of 13 people and wounded numerous others. Moreover, Bolivia wishes to express its solidarity with the families of those deceased or injured in the passage of Hurricane Harvey in Texas, in the United States.

We are grateful for the briefing provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Mr. Ghassan Salamé. We take this opportunity to welcome him and wish him the greatest success in the delicate tasks that have been assigned to him. We are also grateful for the briefing provided by Ambassador Carl Skau on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

We take note of the progress made by the Constitution Drafting Assembly, the work of which resulted in the approval on 29 July of a new draft constitution that should be subject to a popular referendum before entering into effect.

We believe that the commitment to political dialogue demonstrated by the parties during the reporting period should be maintained and reflected in the holding of a transparent popular consultation process that would enable the Libyan people to define their future and to carry out a peaceful, orderly and inclusive transition. In that context, we also highlight the mediation and reconciliation efforts that are being developed by various regional and international actors, such as the African Union, the League of Arab States and, of course, the United Nations to promote the Libyan political process and provide impetus through the strengthening of cooperation mechanisms. We also recognize the initiatives developed by Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia during the months of June and July to support and promote that process.

Despite those significant steps, we are concerned by the sporadic clashes between the parties, which come at a high cost for the civilians trapped in the middle of the conflict. According to the 22 August report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/726), from April to July there were 66 and 78 reported deaths and injuries, respectively, adding to the scores of fatalities caused by the conflict since 2011.

In addition, according to the report on civilian casualties published on 1 August by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, during the month of July 21 people were wounded and 15 killed as a result of bombings, in crossfire or due to the presence of explosive remnants of war and explosive devices, which constitute a serious threat to the safety of the population and negatively impact the return of internally displaced persons to their places of origin. In that regard, we encourage the Libyan national institutions and the agencies and services of the United Nations as a whole to continue, within the framework of resolution 2365 (2017), to do their utmost to neutralize the threat of improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war that are still scattered throughout Libya, which threaten the security of thousands of returning civilians and refugees, as well as the humanitarian staff providing assistance on the ground.

We also note with concern the terrible plight of refugees and migrants who, according to the Secretary-General's report, continue to be arbitrarily detained by the parties, subjected to degrading treatment, torture, sexual violence and the denial of medical care. That is further exacerbated by the proliferation of criminal organizations and trafficking networks, which, according to the report of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), referred to in the Secretary-General's report, could be linked to slave markets.

Added to this is the alarming number of migrants who have lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea, which, according to the report also published by the IOM, exceeded 2,200 fatalities from January to August. We welcome the efforts made by Italy in that regard. In that respect, we remind the actors and parties involved

in the conflict that they have an obligation to respect and to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, to avoid causing greater suffering to the civilian population and to refrain from violating their fundamental rights. We reiterate that a political transition is the only solution to this conflict. It has already begun and must continue. We therefore urge them to abandon any belligerent attitudes or claims that arms can be used as a means to resolve this or any other conflict.

On another note, we wish to express our support for the progress reported today by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) with respect to the implementation of the Committee's mandate, which, in accordance with resolution 2362 (2017), now includes the illegal export of petroleum and its by-products.

Finally, it is important that the Council take into account the impact the Libyan conflict has on the volatile security situation in the region. The consequences of interventionism and regime change policies have had a great impact on the Sahel, particularly in Mali, bringing with them the emergence of chaos, terrorism and militarization, with regrettable results being experienced to this day.

Let us not forget that the final report of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, submitted in the year 2015, established that weapons from Libya considerably strengthened the military capacity of terrorist groups operating in the Sahel subregion, and are currently used to carry out attacks against national security forces, civilians and members of peacekeeping missions in the field. In that regard, the Council should be able to analyse the causes of conflicts in sufficient detail, avoiding misguided assumptions and fully assessing the evidence before it. The Council should understand the magnitude of the actions taken and, above all, take responsibility for the results achieved. If we do not learn from these lessons, we should refer to such activities not as calculation errors, but as actions intended to destabilize.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to welcome Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, in his first appearance before the Security Council. We wish him a successful tenure, which would be reflected in the future and well-being of all Libyans. He can count on the full support of Uruguay.

We would also like to thank the previous Special Representative, Mr. Martin Kobler, for his valuable and courageous administration. If I may, an appropriate metaphor to describe his competencies would be to say that Martin had to pedal uphill and against the wind. He did that enthusiastically until the last day of his mandate.

We would also like to thank Ambassador Carl Skau for his briefing on the activities of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

Moments of change are usually a good opportunity to review what has been done as well as to reflect on the way forward. After six years, it is very difficult to say that the intervention of the United Nations in Libya is a success story. Humanitarian intervention, regime change and nation-building are all expressions used with respect to the situation in Libya; however, the facts leave no room for doubt. Libya remains mired in a situation of institutional ambiguity, in which there are at least two structures that give the appearance of Government, several armed structures with effective control over different areas of Libyan territory, frequent and bloody armed clashes, and a still visible presence of terrorist elements of the self-styled Islamic State that constitutes an additional threat to any peacebuilding or national reconstruction plans. The Government of National Accord envisaged in the Libyan Political Agreement has never materialized, and the Presidency Council has not succeeded in gaining the legitimacy necessary to become a valid actor that was respected by the parties.

On previous occasions, with respect to other matters considered by the Council, we have maintained that continuing to do the same things over and over again can only lead to the same result. Sometimes the most serious things can be said through humour. In his celebrated book, *The Peter Principle*, the author Laurence Peter describes this situation in a sentence that I will read out in English because it does not translate very well into Spanish:

(*spoke in English*)

"If two wrongs don't make a right, try three."

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Let us avoid the temptation to repeat mistakes. Let us keep an open mind and be forward-looking. Let us give Mr. Salamé our undivided support so that he feels free to explore new alternatives. This necessarily means that the Security Council will also be prepared to explore new avenues, keeping in mind what has been successful up until now, but also accepting the challenge of trying new options.

The Council can choose to ignore reality, but it cannot ignore the consequences of having ignored reality.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. President, it is a pleasure for me to congratulate you on your presidency of the Security Council this month.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Ghassan Salamé on his assumption of the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), and to thank him for his important briefing, wherein he reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on UNSMIL (S/2017/726). As the report was published with some delay, we have not add enough opportunity to examine it fully and discuss it in detail it with our capital. We greatly appreciate Mr. Salamé's efforts to communicate with all parties in Libya in order to bring together the points of view among political stakeholders and we would like to wish him every success in his work.

I should like to confirm once again to the Council that the Government of National Accord is committed to supporting all of United Nations efforts to achieve a solution for the political crisis in Libya. I would like to thank Ambassador Carl Skau, Permanent Representative of Sweden, for his briefing as the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011). In his briefing, he talked about recent developments regarding sanctions imposed upon Libya. In this context, I would like to express my appreciation for his outstanding efforts in guiding the Committee.

Since the last briefing by Mr. Martin Kobler, the previous Special Representative of the Secretary-General (see S/PV.7961), the political scene in Libya has remained ambiguous, despite all the communication undertaken by Mr. Kobler and taken up recently by his successor, Mr. Ghassan Salamé, since his arrival in the post. Furthermore, we take note of the ongoing efforts deployed by our friendly brotherly countries aimed at bringing the points of view of political stakeholders together in Libya in order to achieve reconciliation.

In the context of the ongoing ambiguity of the situation and of the deadlock in the political process in Libya, the concerned Libyan parties need to achieve agreement on some amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement, which was signed in Skhirat, Morocco, on 17 December 2015, in a manner that will ensure that all parties will strive to meticulously implement the Agreement, which could in turn pave the way for forming a Government of National Accord that can carry out its work effectively, particularly to alleviating the ongoing suffering of the Libyan people, who experience it on a daily basis and in different areas, deal with a variety of challenges in the country, ranging from terrorism to illicit migration and the smuggling of Libyan assets, namely, oil, oil derivatives and other natural resources.

The Government has to address other harmful challenges,such as human rights violations and the absence of the rule of law. In this context, we note the road map proposed by Mr. Faiez Serraj, President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord, in a statement to the Libyan people on 15 July 2017. In his statement, which was published as a document of the Security Council (S/2017/622, annex), Mr. Serraj took stock of the current situation and talked about the different types of suffering that the Libyan people are facing as a result of the impasse in the implementation of the Libyan Agreement.

At the end of his statement, he proposed an initiative to resolve this situation, saying that he wanted to communicate with all parties in Libya, without exception, in order to achieve peace and stability in the country through dialogue and reconciliation with all actors. His statement contained no menacing language nor did it threaten the use of violence or force. Everyone needs to understand that there is no military solution to the crisis in Libya. The solution can come about only through dialogue and a political process under the auspices of the United Nations. This could be the only clear and positive aspect of the current situation that we are all aware of, given that all parties have said that they are ready to participate in the political process.

Despite a lack of capacity to deal with the enormous challenges with which the Government of National Accord is confronted, the most important of which is achieving security and stability in Libya, it has nonetheless managed not just to significantly hamper the illicit militias that took control of part of the capital, Tripoli, but to dismantle their arsenal and chase them out of the capital, which has had a positive impact on the security situation there. We welcome the desire of UNSMIL to make a progressive return to Libya in the future. We hope that this return will take place as soon as possible. We believe that it will enable UNSMIL to deal with the issues before it by cooperating and communicating directly with the legitimate State authorities. We further hope that it will bolster the Libyan people's confidence and trust in the role played by the United Nations.

While we appreciate the role played by the sanctions committee, in particular in terms of banning the illicit export of Libyan oil, in line with resolution 2146 (2014), amended by resolution 2362 (2017), which added refined petroleum products to the list of sanctioned items — and we note how the committee has been keen, through considerable interaction and interest, to preserve the assets of the Libyan State, namely, oil and petroleum products — we hope that the members of the committee will display the same interest in the issue of improving the management of the frozen Libyan assets, which have been subject to annual erosion, as foreign banks do not manage them in the same way they manage other funds. High negative interest rates are imposed by these banks, resulting in a depletion of capital of the frozen assets. This is a very serious situation, as it is draining away the value of Libyan frozen assets, which are funds that belong to the Libyan people and to future generations.

The main purpose of the asset freeze under resolution 1970 (2011) was to protect these funds and not to punish the Libyan State, but what we are seeing today runs counter to this objective and even contributes to the depletion of assets. We believe that it makes no sense to try to justify the loss of Libya's frozen assets by connecting it to political differences and divisions. The legitimate Government of National Accord has not asked for the freeze to be lifted at this critical juncture, but to find a particular formula that would help it to protect and preserve these funds and investments, even as they remain frozen — I repeat, even as they remain frozen.

In that regard, I would refer to document S/2017/629, which contains a letter from the President of the Presidency Council, Mr. Faiez Serraj, in which he went over the deplorable situation of the assets frozen under the current sanctions regime. We cannot ignore the fact that the existence of dual institutions in Libya has had the negative effect of perpetuating an interim Government that is a parallel Government, according to resolutions of the Security Council, which have asked other States to refrain from dealing with illegitimate parallel entities. What wonder, in that respect, whether it is enough to refrain from dealing with parallel entities or if more effective measures should be taken to eliminate them.

In conclusion, I would like to once again wish Special Representative Salamé every success in his work. We are confident that his exceptional expertise will enable him to achieve great results.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.